

THE STATE OF SOCIAL SERVICES
IN HAWAII

2009

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Honolulu, Hawai`i

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of Research

An internet survey was distributed to supervisors, managers, and administrators of social service agencies and units in the state of Hawai'i in the fall of 2009. Based on two recent policy issues that have affected social services – the 2000 decision to open state “social work” positions to non-social work trained employees but give them a new job title in order to address workforce shortages, and the budget crisis of 2008/2009 that has seen serious cuts to state agencies and units across Hawai'i – two main research questions were asked:

Q1: Do social work trained providers deliver more skilled services in social service related position than those who are not trained as social workers?

Q2: What are the impacts of the budget cuts on social service provision in the State of Hawai'i and to clients who utilize those services?

Summary of Findings

Social Service Workforce

Workforce issues are still highly problematic across the islands. Both in the past and in the current budget crisis the poor coordination of social services is still a significant hurdle. In particular, these workforce and infrastructure issues have hit counties outside of O`ahu:

- Kaua'i County reports some of the biggest challenges in finding qualified applicants for social service positions
- Maui County reports some of the biggest challenges to providing quality services overall
- Hawai'i County reports the least manageable caseloads of any county

Social work trained employees are overall providing better services to clients than non-social work trained employees: They have more competent practice skills, behave in a more ethical fashion, are better client advocates, are more likely to use a strengths-based perspective, and have more knowledge of diversity issues.

Non-social work employees often scored well in work ethic, longevity, and connection to community, but lack necessary skills to effectively perform job related tasks.

Despite these strengths, improving cultural competency of all workers, and offering more trainings related to clinical skills and state systems were seen as critical issues for the social service workforce.

Budget Cuts

As expected, the budget cuts have had a significant impact on the social service network in the state, with both private (52%) and public (30%) agencies/units reporting that they were forced to make cuts to personnel, and half of all agencies/units reporting that they had been forced to cut programs for clients.

Respondents report a statistically significant difference in their ability to meet program goals and objectives, a decrease in the ability to provide high quality services, more problems with unmanageable caseloads, and scarcer resources when comparing the current economic situation with the time before the present budget crisis.

To deal with the budget cuts, agencies/units have been forced to make serious compromises to the quality and integrity of their programs, such as:

- Changing eligibility criteria for clients, making it harder for clients to access services (30%)
- Increasing the use of waitlists, closing cases faster than ever before, and limiting referrals (32%)
- Increasing caseloads per worker, meaning less time is spent on each client while increasing staff hours without compensation, and redefining positions (24%)

15% of respondents said they feared even scarcer resources in the future, and that their agencies/units were facing termination, 22% predicted further declines in programs if swift and meaningful changes were not made, and 28% predicted a significant decrease in quality of life for clients that would be long-lasting due to current budget decisions. Overall, this means that at-risk populations are even more vulnerable to negative outcomes. They do not have access to the same level of quality services and have fewer options or resources to meet their needs

Summary of Recommendations

Social Service Workforce

- 1) Continued and increased support of social work education in the State of Hawai'i. By supporting the strengths of local people, such as strong community connections, and providing the skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment through social work education, the issues in Hawai'i's workforce can be better addressed.
- 2) The state should find more ways to encourage equal access to social work education (including on neighbor islands). Models such as the collaboration between University of Hawai'i Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and the Department of Health and Human Services in their innovative Hawai'i Child Welfare Education Collaboration should be explored in fields other than child welfare as a means to provide sponsored education for employees already in position.
- 3) A system of mandatory Continuing Education needs to be considered for social workers and others working with the state's most vulnerable populations to address ongoing changes in the state, with particular emphasis on cultural competence.

Budget Cuts

- 4) Rather than across the board cuts in personnel and contracts, the state needs to create a clear system of priorities for continuing funding to maintain an adequate level of service provision to meet growing community need.
- 5) The state needs to critically examine the need for coordinating services. This can be accomplished through existing structures, or through the commission of investigations or a new department committed to mapping out the social services structure in the state and to develop plans for more coordinated services.
- 6) Particular attention should be paid to any current or future cuts to neighbor island services. Given that most neighbor island services were already overburdened and under-resourced even before the budget crisis, cuts to these programs should be halted, and future plans that affect neighbor islands should receive the strictest scrutiny.
- 7) Funding should be restored to critical services, such as child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse services, to prevent escalation among families in crisis, and to prevent long term consequences to our most vulnerable populations.

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HISTORY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Maintaining an adequate level of social services has been an ongoing struggle in the state of Hawai`i for a variety of reasons. This struggle has been particularly challenging for neighbor islands (e.g., Hawai`i, Maui, Kaua`i, Moloka`i, and Lana`i) because of characteristics unique to these locations as well as problems common to rural social service systems. The dominant debate in the 1990s was workforce shortage in the social service field. This ongoing shortage created tension between loosening job requirements in order to fill open positions in the social service field (particularly state employees), and the emphasis on maintaining a high level of quality (as determined by education and licensure) in provision of services in the state. Most recently, the focus has been on the economic downturn, particularly since 2008. The budget crisis has led to a series of state cutbacks, with social services in Hawai`i taking a hard hit. This report focuses on the outcomes of these changes – both in regard to the qualifications for social service employees and the budget cuts to social service programs throughout the state of Hawai`i.

Context – Past Social Service Workforce and Service Issues

In 1990, a report from the Legislative Auditor in response to House Concurrent Resolution No. 175, H.D. 1 found that there was a critical social service workforce shortage in Hawai`i. The report illuminated the fact that there was a high demand for people with advanced social work training in the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, and Department of Corrections. The study found, in addition to other information about emergency hires, pay rates, and benefits, that as of October 1989, 30% of the social service positions were vacant.ⁱ The first recommendation was to train residents of Hawai`i in field related to social service delivery. In particular, the Auditor suggested that “the University of Hawai`i should consider giving the School of Social Work more support to meet the demands for social workers” because it had a critical role to play in providing training to Hawai`i’s people. The report also highlighted the high number of vacancies on neighbor islands across multiple domains, and though it was not specifically addressing differences between O`ahu and neighbor islands, the tables of vacancies made it clear that the neighbor islands had grave workforce concerns. This report also marked the first significant discussion of deregulating state social work positions in order to fill them with applicants from other disciplines (such as psychology, sociology, etc.).

Ten years later, a workforce survey was again conducted by the Auditor because the law that regulated the occupational category of social work was set to be repealed in December of 2000. The Sunset Evaluation Reportⁱⁱ again looked at workforce issues, but in a poorly researched study, found that the relatively low number of complaints filed against social service workers determined that there was no need for continued regulation. According to the Hawai`i Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, “professions and vocations should be regulated only when necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of consumers.” At that time, there was little evidence to support the anecdotal knowledge that social workers provide higher quality services that are essential for servicing the state’s most vulnerable populations.

However, as a result of reports, testimony, and legislative activity, two parallel systems of occupational categorization were created – the job titles “social worker” required a social work degree, and “human service professional” which only required a social service related degree (such as psychology or sociology). Both job categories were essentially identical, with the same job duties and responsibilities

(with few exceptions regarding supervision), and yet the social worker title was still related to possessing a social work degree. This change marked a disregard for the earlier 1990 recommendation to support social work education in the state. Instead, this decision signaled a preference for filling social service positions with warm bodies rather than more actively engaging in strategies to educate and recruit the highest trained people for these positions. Because of this decision, non-social work trained people have been filling critical positions in social services throughout the state, but to date have not been compared to their social worker counterparts for the last eight years.

These prior workforce study results indicate the escalating workforce need in social services, and also raises questions about the efficacy of declassifying social work positions in state agencies. Thus, the first research question addressed by this study is:

Q1: Do social work trained providers deliver more skilled services in social service related position than those who are not trained as social workers?

In addition to this question, follow up questions about how these differences impact services and in turn clients will be explored. This question is critical because of the ongoing evidence that despite these changes in occupational categorization, workforce issues are still critical in the state. For example, in their original report, the Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Centerⁱⁱⁱ found the need for 52 more social workers in the medical field throughout the state, while the 2003 midterm report found that the number had increased to 104. Another study conducted in 2007-2008^{iv} found an estimated unmet demand for 234 social workers on Big Island alone to provide adequate health related social services. The Hawai'i Government Employees Association (HGEA) in 2003 reported that a 19% vacancy rate remained amongst state social service jobs. Thus, the declassification of social work positions has not necessarily made a significant impact on the workforce shortages – there is still a high need for social work trained professionals throughout the state – but may have introduced workers that are less capable that can have an impact on the “health, safety, or welfare of consumers.”

The Present – Current Workforce and Social Service Issues

Despite evidence over the last twenty years that Hawai'i has an inadequate social service network which has resulted in a variety of law suits in both the educational system and the mental health system, the recent budget crisis has the potential to further cripple social services. Rather than choosing viable alternatives to make up for low tax revenues, the governor has actively pursued a strategy of passing the budget crisis onto state workers without significant consideration for determining what services are ‘critical’ and which workers should be retained. As of the writing of this article, “furlough Fridays” have been implemented across a variety of state agencies (though they are being contested in court). There has also been an aggressive Reduction in Force (RIF) among state workers, where junior workers are being let go while senior workers can maintain employment, although not necessarily in their original position. This RIF process has created a negative atmosphere among state workers as they wonder whether or not they will still be employed, whether one of their senior employees will “bump” them from their job. The cuts in budget have also left remaining employees to wonder how their programs will be able to function with increased case loads as more clients who are also suffering from the budget crisis need more services from a system that has fewer resources.

In addition to this direct impact on workers employed by the state, Hawai'i has also historically chosen to contract out many services to private social service agencies, to help fulfill the obligations of providing a safety net to the most vulnerable individuals in the state. In the face of the budget crisis,

many of those contracts were cancelled. Between the RIF among state workers and the cancellation of contracts, many critical services have been cut. Particularly on the neighbor islands, stories of the cuts have been grim. This includes the elimination of any adult protective service workers on Lana`i island, caseloads that have doubled in Big Island to twice the Child Welfare League recommended caseload limits, and much more. In addition, the Department of Human Services has reported that 300 more families in 2009 were getting welfare from the state,^v and the FBI reported that Honolulu County had an increase in crimes in the first six months of 2009 (the majority of which were property crimes such as theft) while the rest of the nation showed an overall decrease.^{vi} These emerging reports show how need for services is increasing in the state while services are being cut. Anecdotal evidence in newspaper stories, court testimonies, and legislative hearings have illuminated the significant impact to services, and hence clients. However, little systematic evidence has been gathered to study the initial impact of the budget crisis on social service provision in the state. Thus, the second main question of interest in this report is:

Q2: What are the impacts of the budget cuts on social service provision in the State of Hawai`i, and to clients who utilize those services?

Through an exploration of these two main research questions, this report offers important information about the impact of social work trained professionals in the field, as well as the immediate impact of the state budget crisis on social services and the clients they serve. In particular, where other studies have often neglected to survey neighbor island residents and programs, this survey will pay particular attention to the needs and the situations of social services on the neighbor islands in comparison with Honolulu County. In addition, implications for the impact on clients based on these changes will be discussed, along with recommendations for change that is necessary to keep the social service infrastructure in Hawai`i a viable resource for the state.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

A brief, 46 item internet survey was developed by the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i and distributed across the state of Hawai'i targeting supervisors, managers, and/or administrators working in the social service field. This survey had three main sections: 1) a demographic portion asking respondents about personal/professional characteristics and characteristics of the agency they are representing, 2) a section asking respondents about their evaluation of their current employees, both those who are trained as social workers and those who are not, and 3) a section of questions about the impact of the budget crisis. The survey utilized both quantitative and qualitative measures to gain a broad understanding of the issues in the social service community as well as giving the respondents a chance to identify their own concerns through open ended questions.

Demographic Questions

Demographic questions about each respondent, such as age, and race/ethnicity were collected. In addition, information about their professional lives (e.g., length of time they have worked in social services in Hawai'i, the length of time as supervisors/managers/administrators, etc.) were also collected. Last, agency information was also collected, such as the population or social problem their agency focused on (e.g., child welfare or geriatrics), and whether or not their agency was public or private.

Questions about Social Work vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

Quantitative questions focused on Likert scale items that asked respondents to rate how much they agree or disagree (1 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree) with a series of five statements asking about both their social work trained or non-social work trained employees:

1. My social work/{non-social work} trained employees have knowledge about issues related to diversity.
2. My social work/{non-social work} trained employees have competent practice skills.
3. My social work/{non-social work} trained employees behave ethically.
4. My social work/{non-social work} trained employees utilize a strengths-based perspective.
5. My social work/{non-social work} trained employees are effective client advocates.

Qualitative questions asked respondents to write in their own words the strengths and weaknesses of social work trained employees, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of non-social work trained employees. For the purpose of improving the social work workforce, respondents were also queried about what they considered essential skills or knowledge that should be included in social work education in Hawai'i.

Questions about the Impact of the Budget Crisis

To set up the differences created by the current budget crisis, respondents were asked to reflect about three time periods – the past (defined as the time prior to the budget crisis, operationalized as the time prior to the Summer of 2008), the present (defined as the period of

the budget crisis – operationalized as the time since the Summer of 2008), and the future. Because there are differences of opinion in when the economic downturn began, we clarified by specifying the summer of 2008 to attain consistent chronological evaluations of the “past” compared to the “present” across respondents.

First, respondents were asked to think about the past, and were asked quantitative questions about workforce issues, such as how long on average it took to hire someone in an open position, how long employees stayed in position, and a qualitative question asking about common reasons for leaving a position.

Then, respondents were asked quantitative questions focused the impact of the budget crisis on their program – focused on question such as whether or not they have been forced to let go of staff, and whether or not they have been forced to change or cancel programs. There were also Likert scale items that asked respondents to rate how much they agree or disagree (1 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree) with a series of four statements asking about their ability to deliver services in the past compared to the present:

1. Prior to the budget crisis/{*Currently*} we were/*are* able to carry out the goals and objectives of my program.
2. Prior to the budget crisis/{*Currently*} we were/*are* able to provide the highest quality services.
3. Prior to the budget crisis/{*Currently*} caseloads were/*are* very manageable.
4. Prior to the budget crisis/{*Currently*} there were/*are* enough resources to effectively serve clients.

In addition to these quantitative questions, qualitative questions also asked about the specific changes that have made to their agency, unit, or program, because of the budget crisis, what they saw as the long term impact to social services because of the budget crisis, and the most pressing issues in social services outside of the budget crisis.

Data Collection and Methodology

The survey was conducted completely on the internet utilizing Surveyshare^{vii} – a free internet surveying tool. The survey was made available from Oct. 1 until November 14, 2009. Supervisors, managers, and administrators were invited to participate via an email invitation. The invitation email started among social work students, faculty, and staff at the Myron B. Thomson School of Social Work, and then was passed to members of the community via a snowball methodology (where people who receive the invitation are also asked to pass it along to other supervisors, managers, and administrators). Due to the historic neglect to the concerns of neighbor island residents and social service program, particular effort was spent on disseminating the survey to Hawai`i County, Maui County, and Kaua`i County social service supervisors, managers, and administrators. Due to the snowball sampling method, there is no way to determine response rates since it is unknown how many people actually received the email invitation.

Results

Results have been collapsed into one comprehensive section about the entire State of Hawai`i as well as individual section on the four counties within the state that had adequate response rates (Kaua`i County, Honolulu County, Hawai`i County, and Maui County). Data about each of these counties and the state overall are presented in the back half of this report. Conclusions are drawn and policy recommendations regarding workforce issues and the impact of the budget crisis in the state in the final section.

Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations to consider when interpreting the results. First, this sample used a snowball methodology, which is not a completely random sample. It relies on social and professional networks, and thus some bias may exist as a natural part of this method. Second, although valiant attempts were made to gather information in an equitable way between neighbor islands and Honolulu County, some counties (Kaua`i and Maui) were particularly hard to attain an adequate sample size. Thus, caution must be used when interpreting the county by county data. However, given the relatively low numbers of social service managers, supervisors, and administrators throughout the state, higher numbers of participants on neighbor islands may simply not be possible.

ⁱ Legislative Auditor of the State of Hawai`i (1990). *Study of the Social Worker Shortage Among State Agencies: A Report to the Governor and the Legislature of the State of Hawai`i*. Honolulu, HI.

ⁱⁱ Auditor, State of Hawai`i (2000). *Sunset Evaluation Report: Social Workers – A report to the Governor and the Legislature of the State of Hawai`i*. Honolulu, HI.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hawai`i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center (2003). *Hawai`i health workforce study: A midterm report*. Honolulu Hawai`i. Retrieved on Nov. 1, 2009 from http://www.ahec.hawaii.edu/workforce/hawaii_health_workforce_study_2003_midterm.pdf

^{iv} Withy, K. & Sakamoto, D. (n.d.). *Big Island health workforce assessment*. Hawai`i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center; Honolulu, HI. Retrieved on Nov. 1, 2009 from <http://www.ahec.hawaii.edu/workforce.html>

^v For example, M. Vorsino's *Honolulu Advertiser* article titled "Hawaii's Welfare Numbers Rising for First Time in Decade", published Dec. 27, 2009, retrieved same date from <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2009912270356>

^{vi} Federal Bureau of Investigation (2009). *Crime in the United States: Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report, January to June*. Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/2009prelimsem/index.html>

^{vii} Surveyshare.com

STATE OF
HAWAII

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By Rebecca Stotzer

Summary of Respondents

Demographics of Respondents:

Average Age: 47.7 years

Average Years in HI: 30.2

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 38.8%

Asian: 20.4%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander:
17.3%

Other: 9.2%

Mixed Races/Ethnicities: 14.3%

Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education

High School: 1.0%

Associate's Degree: 2.0%

Bachelor's Degree: 13.3%

Master's Degree: 82.7%

Ph.D.: 1.0%

Education and Licensure

Possess a BSW: 18.9%

Possess a MSW: 64.3%

Licensed in HI: 43.2%

Licensed Outside HI: 3.2%

Not Licensed: 53.7%

Occupational Information:

Average Years in SW Field: 19.4

Average Years as Supervisor: 9.9

Average Years in Position: 6.7

Position Title:

CEO/President/Exec: 13.3%

Administrative or Program

Director: 43.9%

Supervisor: 26.5%, Other: 16.3%

Agency Demographics

Type of Agency

Public: 39.2% Private: 60.8%

Problem/Population Served:

Child & Family Welfare: 32.7%

Mental Health/Substance Abuse:
19.4%

Disabilities: 6.1%

Violence, Crime, & Incarceration:
8.2%

Homeless/Housing: 3.1%

Medical Social Work: 5.1%

Geriatrics: 9.2%

Education: 4.1%

Other: 12.2%

Location:

Hawai'i County: 25.5%

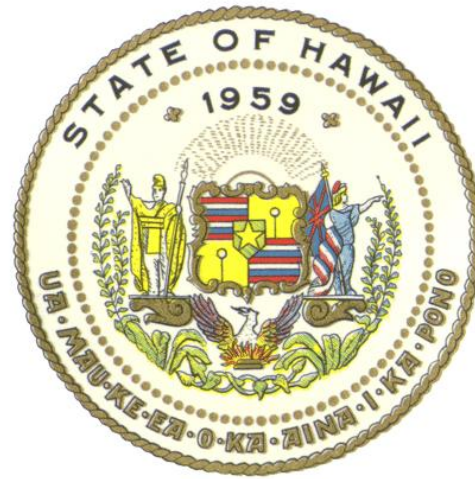
Honolulu County: 51.0%

Kaua'i County: 10.2%

Maui County: 13.3%

Supervisees Off Island: 10.4%

Clients Off Island: 33.7%



Survey Demographics

The *State of Social Services* Survey was completed by 98 people throughout the State, with an average of 19.4 average years of experience in the social service field, and 9.9 average years of experience as supervisors, managers, or administrators. The majority of respondents held social work degrees (65.3%), many were licensed in the state (43.2%), and the majority held advanced degrees (82.7%). Respondents were a fair representation of the people of Hawai'i, with whites (38.8%), Asians (20.4%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (17.3%) making up the majority of respondents.

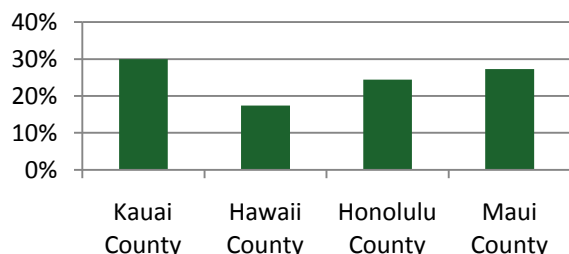
The majority of agencies these respondents represented were private agencies (60.8%), and served a variety of people throughout the state, although the majority were involved in child and family welfare broadly defined (32.7%), followed by mental health and substance abuse services (19.4%), and violence, crime, and incarceration (8.2%). There was fair representation across four counties, with 51.0% of respondents from Honolulu County, 25.5% from Hawai'i County, 10.2% from Kaua'i County, and 13.3% from Maui County. Although most respondents reported that all their supervisees and clients are on the same island, it is also important to keep in mind that in many state systems many of these respondents (33.7%) had clients who were not located on the same island, and many also supervised employees who were on other islands (10.4%).

Historical Workforce Issues – Prior to the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Counties

Even before the budget crisis, Hawai'i faced many significant workforce issues in regard to providing adequate social services. When asked specifically about work force issues, responding supervisors, managers, and administrators said that they had on average 5 positions open per year, positions routinely took an average of 4.2 months to fill.

Percent of Respondents Who Ever Had Positions They Could Not Fill



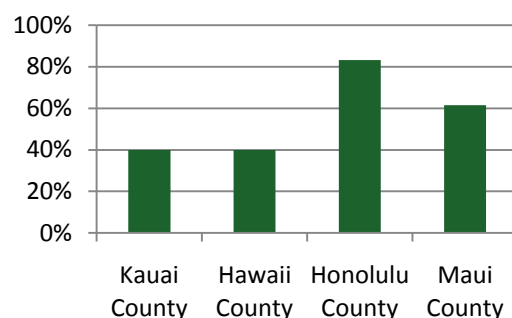
Closing Positions – A Lack of Qualified Applicants

23.6% of all respondents said that in the past they had been forced to close positions because they could not find a qualified applicant. The difference between the counties was not statistically significant¹, suggesting that the issues around finding qualified applicants are similar throughout the state. Although not statistically significant, respondents from Kaua'i County reported the most difficulty finding qualified applicants, while Hawai'i County reported the least difficulty among these respondents.

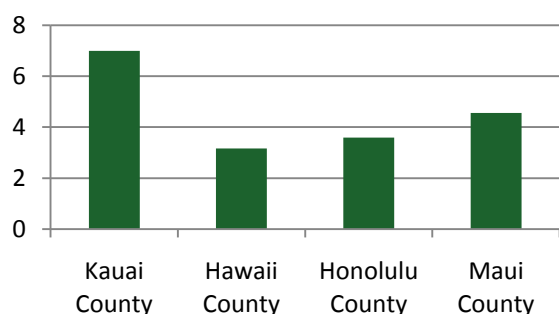
Dispersion of Social Work Degrees

The neighbor islands demonstrate lower rates of having social work trained people in managerial/supervisory/administrative positions, with Kaua'i and Big Island again reflecting the lowest numbers. On Oahu, 83.3% of respondents held social work degrees, 61.5% of Maui County respondents, while Hawai'i County and Kaua'i County demonstrating the lowest at only 40.0% of respondents, a difference that was statistically significant². Although it is important to keep in mind that this is a sample of the broader population of supervisors, managers, and administrators in each county, the fact that rates were so low in the sample suggests that the population of trained social workers are also distressingly low on the neighbor islands, particularly Kaua'i and Big Island.

Percentage of Respondents with Social Work Degrees



Average Number of Months to Fill a Position



Challenges in Hiring and Retention

All counties also reported significant time invested in trying to hire adequately trained social service personnel. Though the differences between counties was not statistically significant³, again, Kaua'i reported the most challenges – with an average of 7 months spent trying to hire a qualified person.

In addition to problems acquiring adequately trained employees, respondents reported that people only stayed in their positions for an average of 4.3 years once hired, and that the most common reasons for leaving their job was a relocation/move (22.7%), left for a job with better pay (17.0%), left for another job for other reasons (15.9%), were promoted (12.5%), or left for intrapersonal/emotional reasons, often related to stress (12.5%).

¹ $\chi^2 = .819$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

² $\chi^2 = 16.4$, $p < .001$

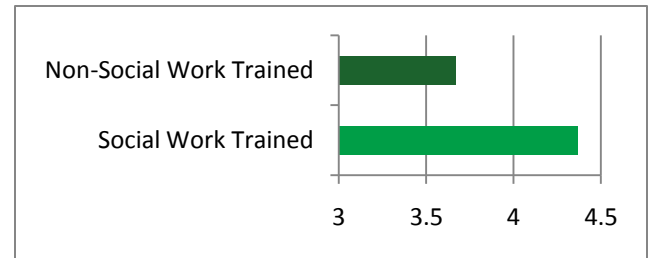
³ $F = 2.12$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

Impact of Social Work Training

In regard to specific skills and knowledge, respondents were asked to rate both their social work trained and non-social work trained employees on a set of skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment.

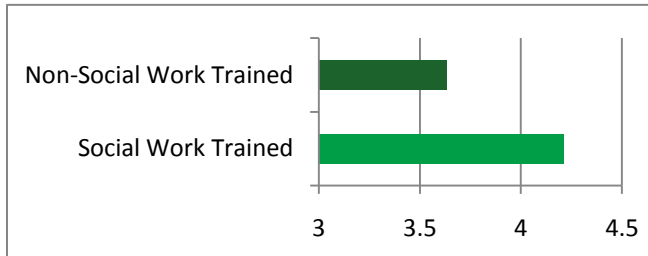
Diversity Issues

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall knowledge of diversity issues (with higher scores representing higher knowledge), social work trained employees averaged a score of 4.4, whereas non-social work-trained employees averaged a score of 3.7, and this difference was statistically significant.⁴



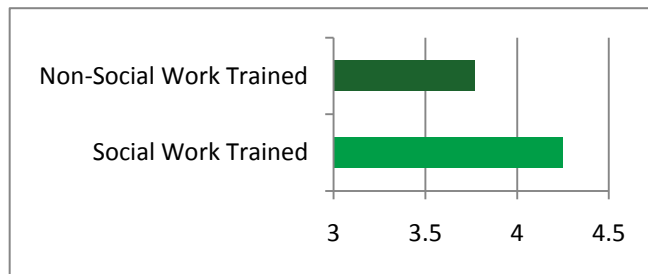
Practice Skills

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall practice skills (with higher scores representing more competent practice skills), social work trained employees scored statistically higher⁵ (average of 4.2) than non-social work trained employees (average of 3.6). This suggests that social workers have better clinical skills than other non-social work trained employees.



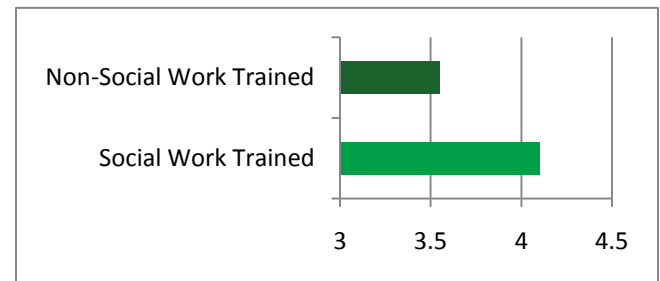
Ethics

In regard to responding whether or not their employees behaved ethnically, respondents scored their social work employees higher on behaving ethically (average of 4.3) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8). This difference was statistically significant,⁶ suggesting that social work-trained employees behaved more ethically.



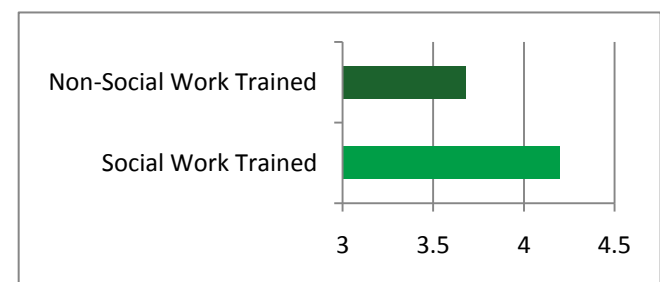
Strengths-Based Perspective

When asked if their employees' perspectives in working with clients, respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees use a strengths-based perspective (average of 4.1) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.6). This difference was statistically significant, suggesting social work training leads employees to see the strengths in their clients more readily than those without such training.⁷



Client Advocacy

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their ability to advocate effectively for clients. Social work trained employees scored an average of 4.2, and non-social work trained employees scored an average of 3.7, a statistically significant difference.⁸ This suggests that respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees were effective client advocates.



⁴ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 5.3$, $p < .001$

⁵ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.6$, $p < .001$

⁶ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.3$, $p < .001$

⁷ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.3$, $p < .001$

⁸ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.1$, $p < .001$

“Social workers believe in and work with the client at the client's level. They are able to formulate goals that are attainable and achievable. They have an awareness of boundaries and understand the reasoning behind boundaries. Social Workers are flexible and have the ability to put the client's needs before their own pride.”

Social Work Trained vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

When asked about the strengths of social work educated employees, respondents had a wide variety of comments that can be categorized into three main groups⁹. Social workers were scored high in generalist social work skills, such as in assessment (12.8%), and in engagement and interviewing (7.4%). In addition, social work trained employees were cited as having excellent values consistent with the field of social work, such as being compassionate and empathetic (11.4%), and performing in an ethical and professional manner (15.7%). Social workers were also noted to have a good understanding of psychosocial factors impacting the lives of clients, such as systems-related factors at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels (11.4%). Compared to the 30 or more strengths that respondents listed about social work trained employees had, 4.2% mentioned weak clinical skills, and 5.7% mentioned a lack of experience,

but frequently specific weaknesses were related to a lack of understanding of specific state systems, such as CWS, public health, and the legal system (7.1%) that relates to a lack of experience rather than a lack of adequate training.

In contrast, where respondents could list many specific skills of social work trained employees¹⁰, respondents often were reporting on the personalities of non-social work trained employees. For example, 11.9% mentioned that non-social work trained employees had a strong work ethic, 14.9% responded that they were compassionate to their clients, and 5.9% mentioned they were flexible and willing to learn. Where skills were missing in strengths, they appeared in the responses about weaknesses – 18.0% reported that non-social work trained employees were missing vital social service skills and knowledge, 10.4% specifically reported a lack of clinical skills, and 9.0% reported poor communication skills and a lack of familiarity with social service related terminology. Regarding values, 14.9% of respondents reported that their non-social work trained employees had significant boundary issues and were susceptible to compassion fatigue, and two individuals highlighted that issues about boundaries often take up a large portion of supervision time. Another 8.9% reported a lack of cultural sensitivity or knowledge of diversity. However, it is important to keep in mind that not all non-social work trained employees lack training at all. Many respondents (17.9%) mentioned the connection to local communities that non-social work trained employees brought, and many discussed employees trained in related fields (such as Marriage and Family Therapists) who had skills similar to social work educated employees.

Need for Training and Education

When asked about areas that should be included in social work education in Hawai'i, again, there was a diverse set of opinions. One of the areas of continued interest was in cultural competence (26.9% of respondents), including topics such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, disabled, rural, and youth populations, and a commitment to more training for the local population (particularly Marshallese and Chuukese). The most prevalent response besides cultural competence was clinical skills – 12.7% of the respondents mentioned that there needed to be a greater emphasis on social work students learning clinical skills. Respondents also emphasized more focus on legal issues, such as maintaining professional/ethical standards, boundaries, and confidentiality (11.9%); macro-practice related issues such as effective supervisions and leadership skills, training in systems, organizational dynamics, and community resources and networks; and renewed emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving skills (7.5%) as well as personal use of self (7.5%). Although not specifically the focus of any one question, the theme of working on interdisciplinary teams and across professions kept emerging across questions about weaknesses of both social work trained employees, non-social work trained employees, and recommendation for future content of social work education in Hawai'i. With social services crossing many arenas, such as public health, medicine, criminal justice, psychology, and many others, respondents mentioned the need to learn about other fields to more effectively engage and participate in interdisciplinary teams for the best interest of the client.

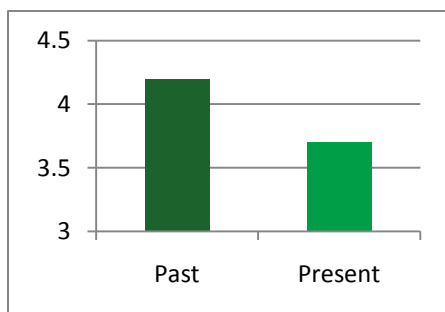
⁹ n = 70

¹⁰ n = 67

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Past the Present

Social Service managers, supervisors, and administrators were asked to judge their ability to provide services along four dimensions, and to reflect on how these were accomplished in the past compared to the present. On all four items, respondents reported worse outcomes in the present than in the past, and those differences were consistently demonstrated to be a statistically significant difference. Overall, these results reflect a frightening situation for social services in the State of Hawai'i in the context of the current budget crisis.

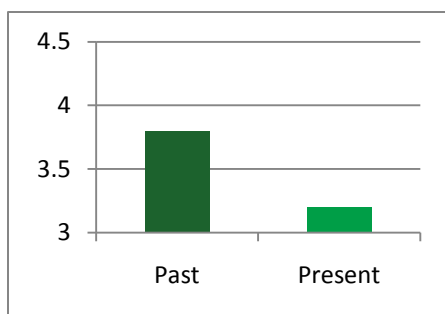
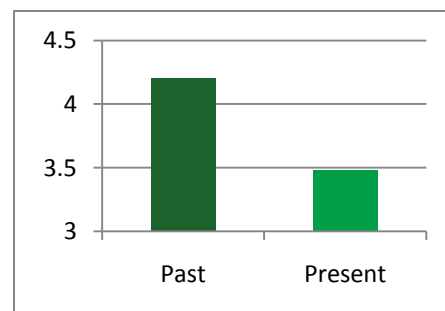


Meeting Program Goals and Objectives

When asked about their ability to effectively meet program goals and objectives, respondents indicated clear differences between the past and the present that were statistically significant.¹¹ Although not perfect scores, respondents reported an average of 4.2 out of 5 for their ability to meet program goals and objects when reflecting on the past, but in the current economic situation, respondents only averaged 3.8.

Provision of High Quality Services

Regarding their ability to deliver high quality services to their target population, supervisors, managers, and administrators reported that prior to the summer of 2008 they were more consistent in providing high quality services compared to the present, a difference that was statistically significant.¹² Participants rated their ability to provide high quality services in the past higher (mean = 4.2) compared to the present (mean = 3.5). This suggests that the quality of service delivery has been severely impacted by the budget crisis.

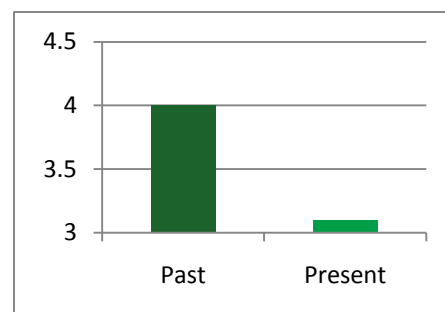


Manageable Caseloads

When asked about caseloads, both in the past and in the present, respondents indicated that caseloads have never been highly manageable. However, caseloads in the present were rated as even less manageable than the past, with the past scored at an average of 3.8, and the present at 3.2.¹³ This indicates that caseloads are becoming even less manageable in the post-budget crisis social service environment, across the variety of populations and domains represented by these respondents.

Adequate Resources

The issue of resources was also another place where the present was rated more poorly than in the past.¹⁴ When rating whether or not they had adequate resources to serve their clients, respondents replied that they agreed that prior to the summer of 2008 there were adequate resources (average of 4.0), while in the present they feel neutral about (average of 3.1) the level of resources. This suggests that in the present agencies are struggling with even fewer resources than in the recent past.



¹¹ Results of paired t-test, $t = 3.9$, $p < .001$

¹² Results of paired t-test, $t = 5.8$, $p < .001$

¹³ Results of paired t-test, $t = 4.3$, $p < .001$

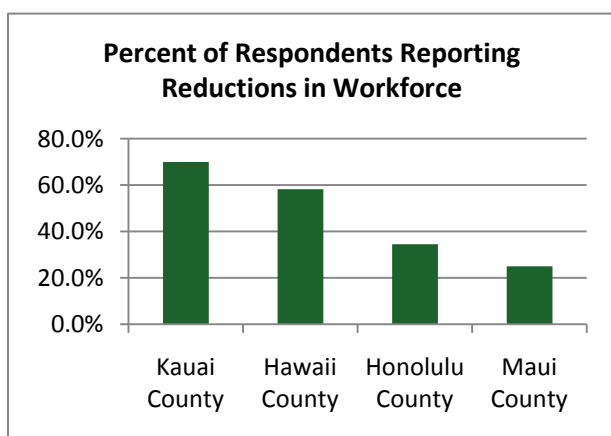
¹⁴ Results of paired t-test, $t = 7.1$, $p < .001$

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Counties

The budget crisis has had a significant impact in social services and the workforce serving the most vulnerable people in our state. Based on historical information about the workforce it is clear that the state is having a difficult time finding adequately trained social service employees, particularly social workers on our neighbor islands, and that caseloads have been and continue to be unmanageable. Despite this high level of need, the impact of the current budget crisis was reflected in answers regarding open positions. Respondents said that historically, their agency/program/unit had an average of five positions open per year they were struggling to fill with qualified personnel, but since the budget crisis, only an average of one position per agency was open, and many of those positions were frozen, a difference that was statistically significant.

Along some dimensions the budget cuts have affected public and private agencies at similar rates across the state. However, in other domains, counties have been hit differently by the budget crisis. Two such domains are related to strategies to deal with the impact of the budget crisis, including reducing workforce, and cutting programs. 43.2% of respondents reported that they'd been forced to let at least one person go since the budget crisis began. Another 52.1% have reported that they have had to cut programs entirely from their agency or unit.

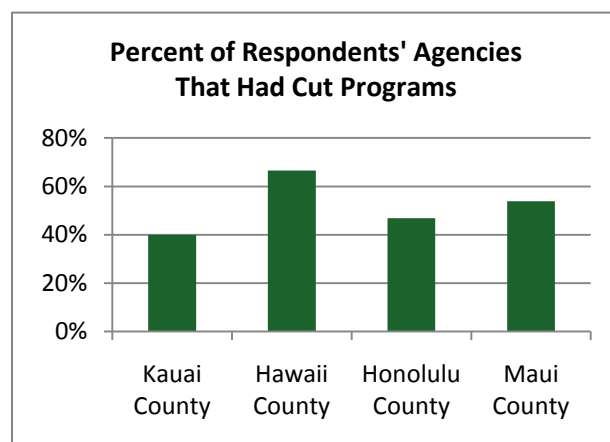


Reductions in Workforce

In regard to letting staff go in response to the budget crisis – respondents from Kauaʻi County and Hawaiʻi County were hit particularly hard: 58.3% of Hawaiʻi County respondents, 70% of Kauaʻi County respondents, 25.0% of Maui County, and 34.6% of Honolulu County had been forced to reduce their workforce, a difference that was statistically significant¹⁵. However, when examining reductions in workforce as a strategy, there was as statistically significant difference between respondents in private vs. public agencies. 30.5% of respondents from public agencies reported they'd been forced to let people go, while 51.7% of private agencies had been forced to employ this strategy due in part to cancelled state contracts.

Cutting Programs

There were no statistically significant differences¹⁶ between the counties in the number of respondents who said that their agency/unit had cut programs as a means of dealing with the budget crisis. However, Hawaiʻi County reported the highest rates of program cuts at 66.7% of respondents' agencies, while Kauaʻi County reported the fewest cuts to program, at 40.0% of respondents' agencies. In regard to public vs. private agencies, these two agency types appeared to be utilizing the strategy at similar rates, with 50% of public agencies reporting that they had been forced to cut programs, and 54.3% of private agencies doing the same.



¹⁵ $\chi^2 = 8.23$, $p < .041$

¹⁶ $\chi^2 = 3.17$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Current Workforce and Program Delivery Issues

Current Impacts

Rich qualitative data has given us insights into the types of changes that have been occurring. 48.1%¹⁷ of respondents said they had been forced to make cuts, such as decreasing services, reducing the number served (turning away clients), and cutting salaries. In addition to cuts, 31.7% of respondents also report being forced to make programmatic changes, the most prevalent strategy being a redefinition of those served (such as making tougher eligibility standards). Another common change reported by participants (23.5%) were staff changes, including longer hours, higher caseloads, having their positions redefined, having workers share cases, and significant changes in morale. Finally, 31.7% also reported significant changes in the quality of their services, such as having longer waitlists, more difficulty getting or referring to other services, shorter lengths of service delivery, and cases being closed too quickly. A scant 5.8% of respondents reported increased budgets, and only 17.6% of respondents said that they had not yet faced any cuts or changes and were holding steady in the economic crisis.

“Caseloads have doubled. Level 4 (most severe mental illness) clients handled by Level 3 teams. Service time per client per month reduced by 75%. More reliance on other programs with more secure funding (e.g., HUD, ADAD, insurance companies) to provide services. Laid off 60% of direct care staff. Direct care employees' pay is down approximately 40%.”

When asked what respondents perceived as the most pressing issue in the state other than the budget crisis¹⁸, many respondents answered regarding issues closest to them. For example, people in child welfare saw child welfare issues as the most pressing state concern, people who dealt with Veterans saw returning soldiers as the most pressing issue, etc. (42.1%). Beyond specific areas of concern, there were still dominant themes about the field that emerged. Many cited problems regarding staff and providers (26.3%), namely, the lack of qualified providers and the need for more social workers. Another 11.8% responded that issues regarding a lack of respect for social services and providers was highly problematic, particularly the perception that social services are not valued by the state and can be cut at will. 15.8% of respondents said that there was a poor system in place in the state, a system that has both had duplications and a lack of coordination while simultaneously having significant gaps in services, and that this systemic problem is the most pressing concern for social services in Hawai'i.

Predictions for the Future

Predictions from respondents for the future were dismal. When asked about the long term impact of the current budget crisis on the future quality of their programs, only 13.8% of respondents¹⁹ reported that they did not foresee any more changes that would need to be made, while the remaining participants all predicted other critical changes. Despite these dismal reports, not all predictions were dire, however. Some participants (11.3%) said that because of the budget cuts they saw their agencies getting more cost effective and innovative. However, 21.3% reported that there would be further declines in quality of services, 27.5% predicted a significant decrease in quality of life for clients, and 15.0% reported that they feared even scarcer resources and that their programs were facing termination. This demonstrates that although some have suggested that the budget crisis is leveling out, the impact of past cuts and current impacts to programs will be felt far into the future.

“Quality will not get better if caseloads continue to rise and numbers in staff remain the same or decrease. The children and families we serve will not receive the utmost care and guidance needed to ensure success in the future. We need to invest now, in order to reap the benefits of society in the future. ”

¹⁷ n = 85

¹⁸ n = 76

¹⁹ n = 80

COUNTY OF
HAWAII

Summary of Respondents

Demographics of Respondents:

Average Age: 47.0 years

Average Years Lived in HI: 21.7

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 56.0%

Asian: 4.0%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander: 12.0%

Other: 12.0%

Mixed Race/Ethnicities: 16.0%

Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education

Associate's Degree: 4.0%

Bachelor's Degree: 24.0%

Master's Degree: 72.0%

Education and Licensure

Possess a BSW: 16.0%

Possess a MSW: 40.0%

Licensed in HI: 70.8%

License in Another State:
25.0%

Not Licensed: 4.2%

Occupational Information:

Median Supervisees: 11

Average Years in SW Field: 13.3

Average Years as a Supervisor/
Manager: 9.3

Average Years in Current Position:
5.4

Agency Demographics

Type of Agency

Public: 2.1%

Private: 72.0%

Problem/Population Served:

Child & Family Welfare: 28.0%

Mental Health/Substance

Abuse: 40.0%

Disabilities: 8.0%

Violence, Crime,

Incarceration: 4.0%

Gerontology: 8.0%

Other: 12.0%

Has Supervisees on Another
Island: 4.3%

Has Clients on Another Island:
24.0%

HAWAI`I COUNTY

By Renée Bertolette, Sharra Dancel, Theodore Ireland, Jonathan King, & Amy Ray-McWhinney



Survey Demographics

Twenty-five total people on the island of Hawai'i, with an average of 13.3 years of experience in the social service field in Hawai'i, and 9.3 average years of experience as supervisors, managers, or administrators completed the *State of Social Services* Survey. The majority of respondents held social work degrees (56.0%); most were licensed in the state (70.8%), and the majority held higher degrees (72.0%), though only 40.0% had Master's Degrees in Social Work. Respondents were primarily white (56.0%), although there was also representation from Asian (4.0%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (12.0%), another race or ethnicity (12.0%), and of mixed race/ethnicity (16.0%).

The majority of these respondents were from private sector agencies (72.0%), and served a variety of people throughout the state, in fields such as mental health/ substance abuse (40.0%) and child and family welfare broadly defined (28.0%).

Historical Workforce Issues

Even before the budget crisis, defined for the purpose of this study as the time prior to the summer of 2008, Hawai'i County faced many significant workforce issues in regard to providing adequate social services. When asked specifically about work force issues, responding supervisors, managers, and administrators said that they had on average 5.9 positions open per year, positions routinely took an average of 3.2 months to fill, and 17.4% of respondents said that they'd had to close positions because they could not find a qualified applicant.

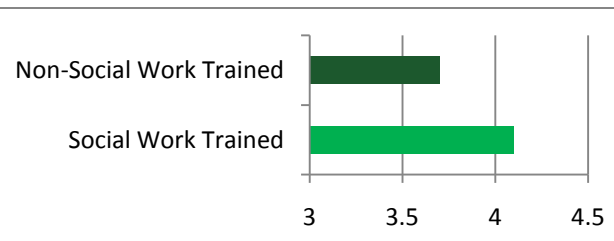
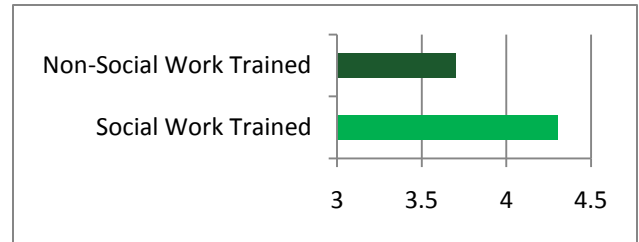
In addition to problems acquiring adequately trained employees, respondents reported that people only stayed in their positions for an average of 3.6 years once hired. The three main reasons for leaving a job are: left for another job (21.7%), relocated or moved (17.4%), and leaving for interpersonal/emotional reasons, such as burnout or stress (17.4%).

Impact of Social Work Training

In regard to specific skills and knowledge, respondents were asked to rate both their social work trained and non-social work trained employees on a set of skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment. Hawai'i County is the only island with a viable alternative education to social work – the Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFTs). A low number of respondents were MSWs, and MFTs were frequently discussed as a common non-social worker.

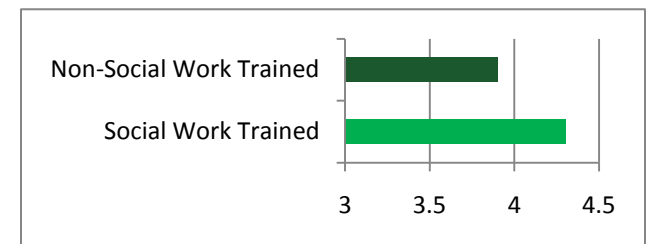
Diversity Issues

Respondents from Hawai'i County were asked to rate their employees on their overall knowledge of diversity issues, social work trained employees averaged a score of 4.3, whereas non-social work-trained employees averaged a score of 3.7, which was statistically significant.²⁰ This suggests social workers in Hawai'i County are more knowledgeable about diversity issues than non-social workers.

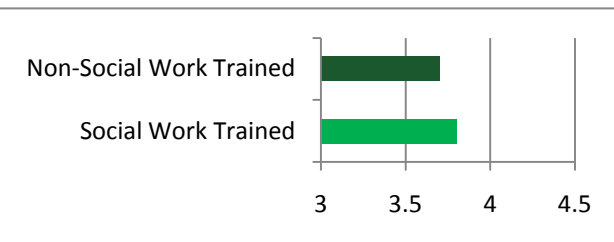


Practice Skills

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall practice skills. Results suggests that social workers in Hawai'i County have slightly better direct practice skills than other non-social work trained employees (average of 4.3), although not significantly greater than other disciplines (average of 3.7).²¹



In regard to responding whether or not their employees behaved ethically, respondents scored their social work employees higher on behaving ethically (average of 4.3) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8). Although social work trained employees received higher scores, this result was marginally significant.²²

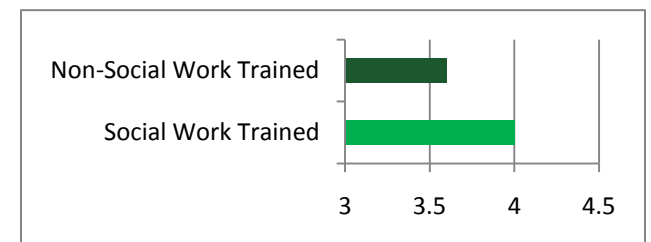


Ethics

Strengths-Based Perspective

When asked about their employees' perspectives when working with clients, respondents from Hawai'i County were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees use a strengths-based perspective (average of 4.1) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.6). This difference was also not statistically significant²³, suggesting that in Hawai'i County

social work trained and non-trained employees utilize a strengths-based perspective equally.



Client Advocacy

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their ability to advocate effectively for clients. Thus, although respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees were more effective client advocates (average of 4.3), they do not differ significantly compared to non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8).²⁴

²⁰Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.23$, $p < .04$

²¹Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.07$, $p = n.s.$

²²Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.86$, $p < .08$

²³Results of a paired t-test, $t = 0.19$, $p = n.s.$

²⁴Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.24$, $p = n.s.$

Impact of Social Work Training

“Social Workers have a wealth of tools and perspectives to help solve problems. They are uniquely attuned to cultural differences. They work from a strengths perspective and an awareness of the complexities of the systems. They uniquely focus on social justice, dignity, quality of life, and the importance of social relationships.”

Social Work vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

When social service managers, supervisors, and administrators were asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses of employees with a social work degree, 95% of respondents from Hawaiʻi County mentioned strengths, with 55% of those mentioning strengths related to social work perspective and knowledge, including strengths-based perspective, understanding systems, and having a broad base of social work-related knowledge. Approximately 50% of respondents focused on strengths in generalist social work skills, specifically assessment and clinical skills. 50% of respondents also mentioned social work values as a strength (e.g., strong ethics and cultural competency). 44% also mentioned personal traits and abilities like resourcefulness, problem solving skills, and flexibility. The 32% of respondents who mentioned weaknesses addressed areas regarding lack of knowledge and/or experience (16%), specifically in clinical skills and understanding of state

systems (e.g., Child Welfare Services), and also some weaknesses regarding boundary issues (3%). Overall, this indicates that in Hawaiʻi County employees with a social work degree are viewed as having a strong foundation in values, cultural competency, and social work knowledge critical in a social service environment, but that there may be some areas of clinical practice that are in need of additional assessment and possible improvement.

Respondents in Hawaiʻi County also identified strengths for social service practitioners who lack social work degrees. Of the 19 respondents who answered this question, 83% mentioned strengths. 41% of the strengths could be categorized as social work skills and perspective, which includes connecting to resources, strengths-based perspective, problem solving, and counseling skills, which was mentioned most often (15%). This was due in part to the number of non-social work trained employees who held advanced degrees in related fields: 50% of the counseling strengths mentioned were associated with workers who have degrees in counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy. Another comment was related to a strong work ethic (meaning dedication, hard working, etc.), which was mentioned second only to counseling skills (13%). It seems likely that in the absence of a social work degree, practitioners hone skills that can be gained from the workplace and through direct practice experiences. Fifty percent (50%) of respondents mentioned weaknesses in regards to employees who lack social work degrees. The primary weakness for social service practitioners who lack social work degrees was identified by respondents as being a lack of social work skills and knowledge (31%). This includes how to advocate for clients, manage paperwork and documentation for large caseloads, and having a knowledge base in specialized areas. The second weakness identified is boundary issues and compassion fatigue (25%). In the absence of formal social work training, practitioners may not have the opportunity to learn skills and acquire specialized knowledge and values relevant to the social service field. Also, practitioners who lack social work degrees may have difficulty maintaining healthy boundaries due to a lack of training in methods of self-care.

Need for Training and Education

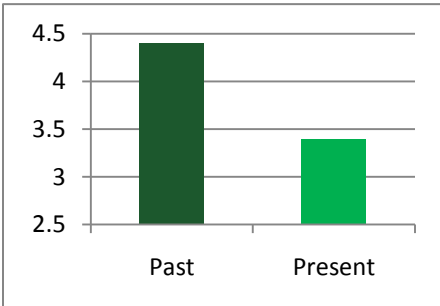
Supervisors, managers, and administrators in Hawaiʻi County responded with widely held beliefs that support training in cultural competency and themes related to specialized skills of Macro Social Work should be integrated into social work education in Hawaiʻi in order for employees to work more effectively with clients. As one social service manager commented, “Absolutely everyone needs a better understanding of social justice issues for all marginalized groups.” What this may be indicating is that social service managers, supervisors, and administrators are responding to the reality that social work education need to be contextual and specific to Hawaiʻi, and that cultural competence is often the precursor for engagement.

Critical social service knowledge was “having knowledge of local culture [and] how to adapt Western teaching to ‘local ways’.”

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Past the Present

Social Service managers, supervisors, and administrators were asked to judge their ability to provide services along four dimensions, and to reflect on how these were accomplished in the past compared to the present. Overall, on all four items, respondents from Hawai'i County reported worse outcomes in the present than in the past, and those differences were consistently demonstrated to have a statistically significant difference, reflecting a significant impact to services.

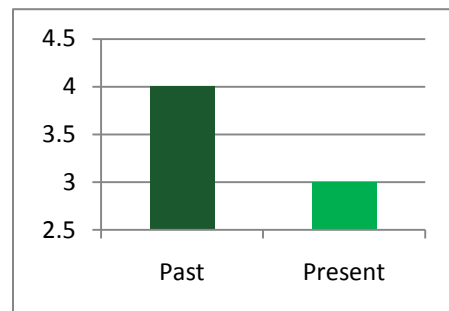
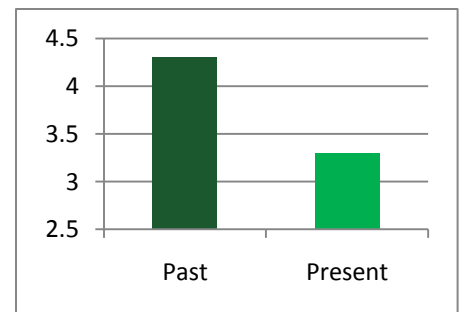


Meeting Program Goals and Objectives

When asked about their ability to effectively meet program goals and objectives, respondents indicated clear differences between the past and the present that were statistically significant. Respondents reported an average of 4.4 out of 5 for their ability to meet program goals and objects when reflecting on the past, but in the current economic situation, respondents only averaged a 3.4²⁵ This suggests that in Hawai'i County agencies and programs are less able to meet program goals and objectives now than prior to the budget crisis.

Provision of High Quality Services

Regarding their ability to deliver high quality services to their target population, supervisors, managers, and administrators reported that prior to the summer of 2008 their ability to provide high quality services was better compared to the present, a difference that was statistically significant. The past scored an average of 4.2 while the present was scored an average of 3.5. This suggests that overall, the provision of services is poorer in the present than in the past.²⁶

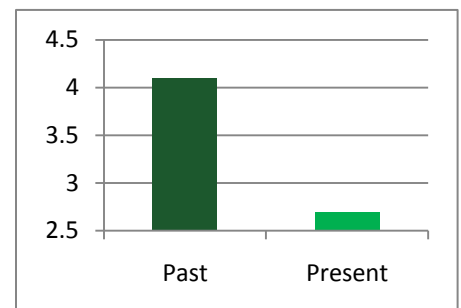


Manageable Caseloads

When asked about caseloads, respondents indicated that caseloads have become even less manageable since the budget crisis than in the past. When asked about manageability, caseloads in the past scored at an average of 4.0 and at present, caseloads scored at 3.0, indicating significantly less manageable caseloads in the present.²⁷ In addition, compared to other counties, Hawai'i County reported some of the least manageable caseloads in the state.

Adequate Resources

The issue of resources was also another place where the present was rated more poorly than in the past.²⁸ When rating whether or not they had adequate resources to serve their clients, respondents replied that they agreed that prior to the summer of 2008 there were more adequate resources (average of 4.1), while in the present they feel that availability of adequate resources as decreased significantly (average of 2.7). This suggests that in the present, agencies on the Big Island are struggling with even fewer resources than in the recent past. Similar to caseloads, Hawai'i County was also the county with the lowest scores related to adequacy of resources.



²⁵ $t = 3.5, p < .002$

²⁶ $t = 3.2, p < .004$

²⁷ $t = 3.1, p < .005$

²⁸ $t = 4.9, p < .001$

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Current Workforce and Program Delivery Issues

Current Impacts on Hawai'i County

Currently, social service agencies have had to make a substantial number of changes to their personnel and the programs in order to continue providing services. For example, 58.3% of respondents in Hawai'i County reported that they'd been forced to let at least one person go since the budget crisis began. Another 66.7% have reported that they have had to cut programs entirely from their agency. However, qualitative data gives a richer picture of the complex nature of the changes that the budget crisis has imposed on social service agencies in Hawai'i.

"Since the economic [crisis] we have seen an increase in domestic violence and substance use with our clients - as well as in general an increase in child abuse and neglect reports."

In the current economic situation, a number of respondents (48.7%) noted that they have had to make direct cuts besides cutting programs such as: decreasing direct service hours, reducing number of clients served, reducing staff, and reducing salaries. There have also been changes in eligibility criteria, which make it more difficult for clients to become eligible for services. One child welfare supervisor stated that they have had to close cases more quickly in order to keep caseloads more manageable. There has also been an increased need to focus on high risk cases while cases deemed less severe are being neglected. A team leader who deals with the severely mentally ill population stated that their caseloads have doubled from 15 cases to 30 cases, even though their direct contact hours per client dropped from 16 hours per month to 3.5 hours per month. Other changes have been more subtle, such as one supervisor who mentioned *"reduced administrative and operational supports and increased costs"* as well as a reduction in client benefits, such as gas coupons and assistance funds being no longer available, and being unable to service clients without insurance (when they had done so in the past). The responses given indicate that programs are overburdened with higher caseloads, decreased staff, and decreased resources and services to provide for clients, putting vulnerable Hawai'i County residents at further risk.

The most important issue facing current social/human service delivery in Hawai'i, other than the current economic situation, was identified by 85% of respondents as being problems in service delivery. These problems in services included insufficient services to meet demand, poor access to services, and unsatisfactory medical and health care. The present economic situation has served to exacerbate the social/human service delivery in Hawai'i due to deliberate cuts in funding, however, problems in services have existed historically because of poor social service infrastructure in Hawai'i County, and the remote location of consumers making service delivery difficult.

Predictions for the Future of Social Services in Hawai'i County

"With reductions in service hours for clients we are seeing the inability for our workers to implement all goals and outcomes. We are also seeing increased stress on service supervisors as their jobs become more micro managing ... workers are taking on second jobs due to hour-reductions for their clients."

Many respondents to this survey felt that there would be serious long term effects to social service organizations that are currently experiencing economic difficulties in Hawai'i County. One person identified how their biggest concern was the *"clients falling between the cracks."* The majority of respondents (28%) believed that there will be a decrease in overall quality of services for clients with whom they work relating to a decrease in the quality of work, therefore care (15%) to individual clients. While some respondents cited inadequate funding as one concern (12%), a nearly equal amount (9%) felt that this lack of funding and resources would cause some programs to shut down. In addition, the ongoing concern about social service workforce are clear when one worker said "lack of qualified professionals to deliver the needed services" was a critical issue in the future of Hawai'i County.

HONOLULU COUNTY

Summary of Respondents

Demographics of Respondents:

Average Age: 47.0 years

Average Years Lived in HI: 35.0

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 26.0%

Asian: 32.0%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander: 20.0%

Other: 6.0%

Mixed Race/Ethnicity: 16.0%

Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education

High School: 0.0%

Associate's: 2.0%

Bachelor's: 6.0%

Master's: 90.0%

Ph.D.: 2.0%

Education and Licensure

Possess a BSW: 2.0%

Possess a MSW: 84.0%

Licensed in HI: 50.0%

Licensed in Another State:
46.0%

Not Licensed: 4.0%

Occupational Information:

Median Supervisees: 15.4

Average Years in SW Field: 19.6

Average Years as a Supervisor/
Manager: 10.3

Average Years in Current Position:
6.5

Agency Demographics

Type of Agency

Public: 34.7%

Private: 65.3%

Problem/Population Served:

Child & Family Welfare: 28.0%

Mental Health/Substance
Abuse: 40.0%

Disabilities: 8.0%

Violence, Crime,

Incarceration: 4.0%

Gerontology: 8.0%

Other: 12.0%

Has Supervisees on Another

Island: 12.0%

Has Clients on Another Island:
40.0%

HONOLULU COUNTY

By Lynne Brauher, Becki Kulm, Paola Rochabrun Oliveira, Susanne Paleka, Loli Paranada, & Leahné Toscano



Survey Demographics

Fifty respondents in the County of Honolulu completed the *State of Social Services* Survey. The O`ahu respondents have an average of 19.6 years of experience in the social service field, and 10.3 years of experience as supervisors, managers, or administrators. The majority holds social work degrees (84%); many hold Hawai`i licensure (50%), and the vast majority hold advanced degrees (90%). O`ahu respondents are primarily Asian (32 %), with representation from other ethnicities including White (26.0%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (20.0%), Other assorted race/ethnicities (6.0%), and 16% people with two or more races or ethnicities.

The majority of respondents worked for private agencies (65.3%). Forty percent worked in mental health/substance abuse and 28% in child and family welfare broadly defined. The other areas of focus were "other" (12%), disabilities (8%), gerontology (8%), and violence, crime, and incarceration (4%).

Historical Workforce Issues

Even before the budget crisis, defined for the purpose of this study as the time prior to the summer of 2008, Honolulu County faced many significant workforce issues concerning the provision of adequate social services. When asked specifically about work force issues, responding supervisors, managers, and administrators said that they had on average 5.3 positions open per year, positions routinely took an average of 3.6 months to fill, and 24.4% of respondents said that they had had to close positions because they could not find a qualified applicant.

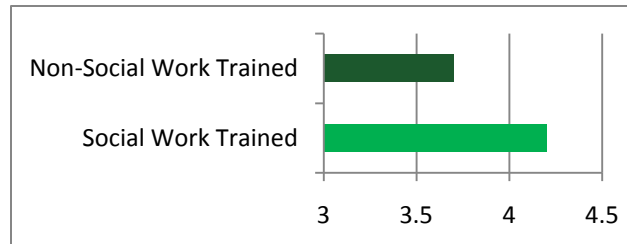
In addition to problems acquiring adequately trained staff, respondents from O`ahu reported that employees stayed in their positions for an average of 4.0 years once hired. Employees left positions for relocation (26.1%), better pay (17.4%), another job (13.0%), interpersonal/emotional issues (13.0%), or promotion (10.9%).

Impact of Social Work Training

In regard to specific skills and knowledge, respondents were asked to rate both their social work trained and non-social work trained employees on a set of skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment.

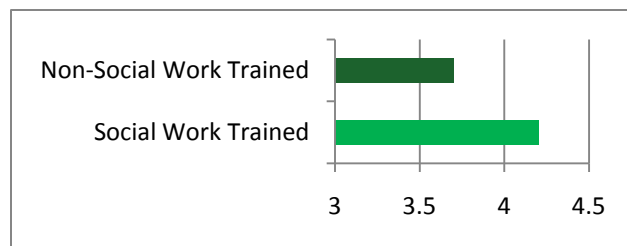
Diversity Issues

Respondents from Honolulu County rated their employees on overall knowledge of diversity issues. Results suggest that social work trained employees are thought to have more knowledge about diversity issues (average score of 4.4 out of 5); while non-social work employees had less (average score of 3.8), a difference that was statistically significant.²⁹



Practice Skills

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall practice skills (with higher scores representing more competent practice skills). Social work trained employees scored statistically higher³⁰ (4.2) than non-social worked trained staff (3.7). This suggests that social workers may have better practice skills than non-social work trained employees.

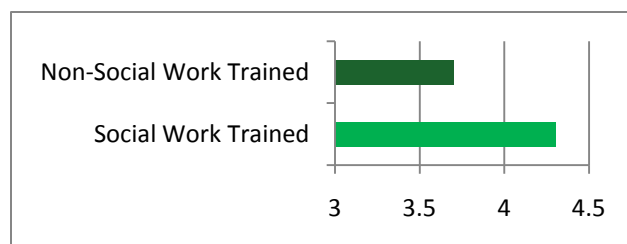
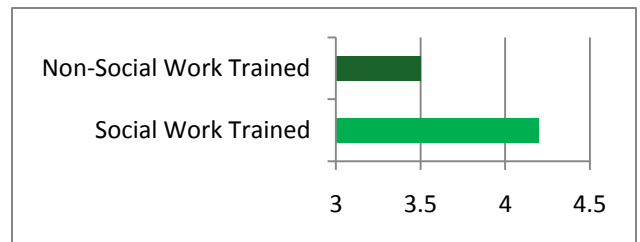


Ethics

In regard to responding whether or not their employees behaved ethnically, respondents from Honolulu County scored their social work employees higher on behaving ethically (average of 4.2) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.7). This difference was statistically significant, suggesting that social work trained employees behaved more ethically than non-social work trained employees.³¹

Strengths-Based Perspective

When asked if they agreed that their social work trained employees used a strengths-based perspective, respondents agreed (4.2) in comparison to their non-social work trained employees (3.5). This difference was statistically significant, suggesting social work training leads employees to see strengths in their clients more readily than those without such training.³²



Client Advocacy

Respondents from Honolulu County were asked to rate their employees on their ability to advocate effectively for clients. Social work trained employees scored an average of 4.3, and non-social work trained employees scored an average of 3.7, a statistically significant difference.³³ This suggests that respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees were effective client advocates.

²⁹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.1$, $p < .001$

³⁰ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.1$, $p < .005$

³¹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.8$, $p < .011$

³² Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.4$, $p < .005$

³³ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.1$, $p < .005$

Social workers “have a great understanding of their role and the valuable role they play in affecting change.”

Impact of Social Work Training

Social Work vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

50% of respondents from Honolulu County who answered questions about the strengths and weaknesses of social work trained employees stated that generalist social work skills are a strength. Generalist social work skills were seen as engagement/interviewing skills (17%), skill in assessment (22%), and clinical skills (28%). In addition to these basic skills needed for effective social service delivery, values were also cited as a

strength (61% of respondents), namely, that social work trained employees had strong ethics (18%), advocacy (18%), professionalism (17%), cultural competence (10%), and compassion/empathy (36%). On O`ahu, psychosocial awareness was also a strength among social workers (42%), with 20% of respondents citing the knowledge of the ecological perspective, 20% citing the knowledge and use of a strengths based perspective, and 13% of respondents noted strengths in understanding systems and system complexities. In addition to these skills, 25% of respondents also noted personality and character traits such as being flexible, resourceful, and having good problem solving skills. In regard to weaknesses of social work trained employees, respondents cited a lack of some type of knowledge or experiences (31%), the majority of which felt clinical skills were a weakness, as well as a lack of knowledge about mental health issues, which could be due in part to the large number of respondents from the mental health field. Another 11% felt that documentation and paperwork skills were weak, and 6% felt that there was weakness in role clarity, particularly on multidisciplinary teams.

Non Social Work Trained employees: “Primary strengths: They care about the clients know the social service system and want to help. Primary weakness: Don’t always know how to work with or what to do for clients with complex problems and needs”

In comparison to the strengths that social workers exhibited in basic skills necessary to the social service environment, 54% of respondents on O`ahu noted the lack of skills among non-social work trained employees. Of these, the majority cited a lack of general skills and knowledge about the social service field, and a quarter stated there was a significant lack in clinical skills. However, these employees did have other strengths related to social services (31%), such as being well connected with the community, and being strong problem solvers. In the absence of many of the basic skills needed for the job, respondents noted that non-social work trained employees often have a strong work ethic (23%), have experience in the field and practice wisdom (14%), and are generally compassionate and empathetic (29%). Regarding weaknesses, similar to reports from other islands, the biggest concern is the presence of boundary issues and compassion fatigue associated with a lack of training

in self-care (10%). In addition, 34% of respondents said there was a general lack of appropriate values, such as a lack of professionalism, cultural sensitivity, poor ethics, and lack of self-awareness.

Need for Training and Education

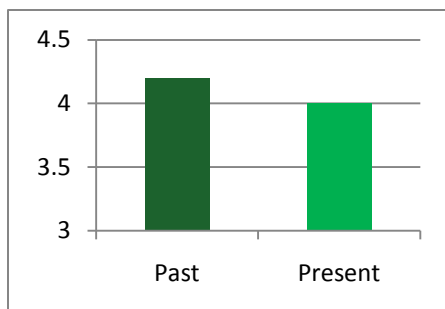
When asked what skills should be added or emphasized in social work training in the stated, Honolulu County respondents heavily emphasized ongoing cultural competence training, specifically citing race/ethnic diversity, issues about sexuality, and issues for rural populations. 10% specifically mentioned the need for more focus on clinical skills, but at the same time, 12% emphasized the need for more education around macro issues such as systems knowledge and advocacy work. The majority mentioned some kind of values related educational needs, such as in legal issues around boundaries, confidentiality, and professional/ethical standards, 12% mentioned a need for more discussion of critical thinking, and 10% mentioned more education is needed regarding the professional use of self.

“New social workers need to develop a better understanding of their professional identity and this is accomplished through emphasis on professional ethics boundaries and critical thinking that can be enhanced in the school of social work.”

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Past and the Present

Respondents were asked to judge the ability of their agency to provide services along the dimensions below, and to reflect on any differences between past (defined as prior to the summer of 2008) and the present. This series of questions were posed using a traditional Likert scale (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree). Respondents consistently reported more difficulty meeting agency objectives at the point in time they responded to the survey. Overall, these results reflect a dismal outlook in the context of the current budget crisis, and raise increasing concerns about the future of social services in the State of Hawai'i.

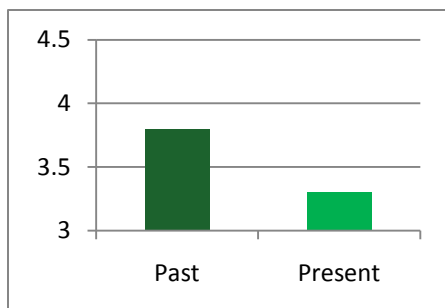
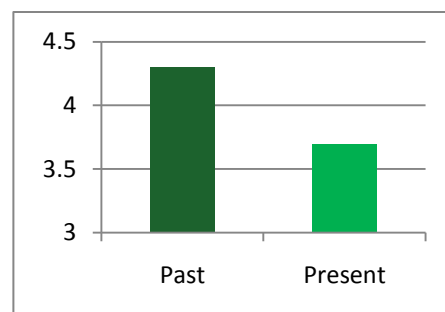


Meeting Program Goals and Objectives

When asked about their ability to effectively meet program goals and objectives, respondents from Honolulu County indicated differences between the past and the present that were not statistically significant.³⁴ Respondents reported an average score of 4.2 out of 5 in their past ability to meet program goals and objectives, while the current average dropped slightly to 4.0. This suggests that on O'ahu the budget crisis has minimally impacted the ability of agencies/units/programs to meet their goals and objectives.

Provision of High Quality Services

Regarding their ability to deliver high quality services to their target population, survey respondents reported that in the past (average score of 4.3 out of 5), they were more capable of providing high quality services compared to the present (3.7). This difference is statistically significant,³⁵ suggesting that the budget crisis has significantly impacted the ability of O'ahu based agencies to provide high quality services.

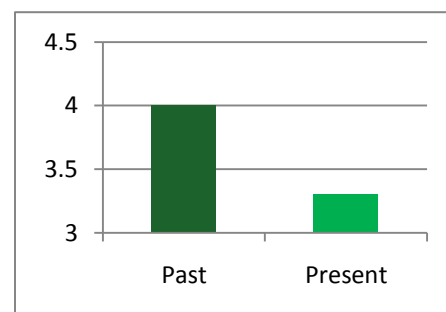


Manageable Caseloads

The survey results suggest that respondents believe that while caseloads have traditionally been difficult, they were more manageable in the past (3.8 out of 5) compared to the present (3.3 out of 5), which is a statistically significant difference.³⁶ This indicates that caseloads are becoming less manageable following the budget cuts, across the variety of populations and domains represented by these respondents.

Adequate Resources

When rating whether or not they had adequate resources to serve their clients, respondents replied that prior to the summer of 2008 there were adequate resources (average of 4.0 out of 5). The average dropped to 3.3 in the present.³⁷ This statistically significant difference suggests that currently agencies are struggling with even fewer resources than in the recent past.



³⁴ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.4$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

³⁵ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.1$, $p < .001$

³⁶ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 3.1$, $p < .004$

³⁷ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.7$, $p < .001$

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Current Workforce and Program Delivery Issues

In Honolulu County, 34.7% of respondents reported that they had been forced to let at least one person go since the budget crisis began. Another 46.8% have reported that they have had to cut programs entirely from their agency. 49% of respondents said they'd been forced to make cuts, such as decreasing services, reducing the number served (turning away clients), cutting salaries, and suffering from the Reduction in Force (RIF).

Regarding cuts to social services, "The public also then takes their cue from their leaders and places less value on social service programs. One measure of our humanity is how well we care for those most in need."

45% of responses indicated their agency had been forced to make programmatic changes, the most prevalent strategy being a redefinition and/or reprioritization of those served (such as accepting clients formerly served by other agencies, waitlists, or making tougher eligibility standards). Another common change reported by participants (27%) were staff changes, including longer hours, higher caseloads, having their positions redefined, having workers share cases, and significant morale declines. Finally, 18% also reported seeing significant changes in the quality of their services, while other responses indicated concern about the possibility of future downward trends. A scant 2% of responses showed increased budgets, and only 20.0% said that they had not yet faced any cuts or changes and were holding steady in the economic crisis. According to one crisis supervisor, *"...our program currently has to provide more services to more clients than before the budget crisis for the same compensation and with the same number of staffing. Additionally, due to cuts in other programs, this program is seeing more clients than before and the scope of the program is being forced to shift slightly in order to meet the needs of additional clients (often with less services than they had access to before the budget crisis)."*

"Even after the state recovers, it will be difficult to raise the level of service once the minimum standards have been lowered."

The O`ahu responses indicated a variety of concerns regarding issues facing current social/human service delivery in the state, apart from the current budget crisis. 31% of the responses in this area pointed to concerns regarding the low numbers of trained social workers, accountability for practice, as well as agency administration and focus. Of those responding, 13% indicated that planning and leadership were problematic, especially at higher levels of government. Another 13% state that poor systems in place are challenging, such as the overall view of clients in a negative light, with focus more on punishment than treatment, and duplication of

services and service gaps, among others. Almost half of responses indicated that service delivery (such as access to services, numbers of providers, funding for programs, and onerous levels of required documentation) are problematic. This area appears to be particularly vulnerable to the current budget situation, which may fuel some of the concerns of more negative outcomes and trends among responses.

Predictions for the Future of Social Services in Honolulu County

When asked about the long-term impact of the current budget crisis on the future quality of their programs, only 10% of respondents reported that they did not foresee any changes. 18% of O`ahu respondents suggested the long-term impact on clients would be a decrease in their quality of life, and 17% of the responses reflected a decrease in services provided to clients. On a positive note, 10% cited that they did not anticipate any changes, and 6% felt that social service organizations would become more cost effective. Other concerns mentioned for the County included effects on staff, retention, quality of work, staff development, and workload. One theme that could be inferred from the responses is that the respondents did not have the sense that these changes were complete, or time limited, and that there was a sense that the worst may be yet to come.

"Stress, will begin taking a toll on everyone. This may increase our referrals and ultimately case loads. There are a lot of confusing changes that no one seems to know. This lack of knowledge now will cause a snow-ball effect of confusion in the long term."

KAUA`I COUNTY

Summary of Respondents

Demographics of Respondents:

Average Age: 50.7 years

Average Years Lived in HI: 28.2

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 60.0%

Asian: 10.0%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander: 30.0%

Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education

High School: 10.0%

Bachelor's: 10.0%

Master's: 80.0%

Education and Licensure

Possess a BSW: 22.2%

Possess a MSW: 30.0%

Licensed in HI: 55.6%

Not Licensed: 44.4%

Occupational Information:

Median Supervisees: 10.60

Average Years in SW Field: 14.50

Average Years as a Supervisor/

Manager: 9.80

Average Years in Current Position:

8.22

Agency Demographics

Type of Agency:

Public: 60.0%

Private: 40.0%

Problem/Population Served:

Child Welfare: 30.0%

Mental Health/Substance

Abuse: 40.0%

Violence, Crime, Incarceration:

10.0%

Medical: 10.0%

Gerontology: 10.0%

Has Supervisees on Another Island:

10.0%

Has Clients on Another Island:

30.0%

KAUA'I COUNTY

By Todd Gordon, Coleen Groen, Rana Jackson, & Pamela L. Umphrey



Survey Demographics

The *State of Social Services* Survey was completed by 10 total people throughout the County of Kaua'i, with an average of 14.50 years of experience in the social service field, and 9.80 average years of experience as supervisors, managers, or administrators. The majority of respondents held social work degrees (52.2%); many were licensed in the state (55.6%), and held higher degrees (30.0%). Respondents were primarily white (60.0%), with representation from Asian, (10.0%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (30.0%) populations.

The majority of agencies these respondents represented were public agencies (60.0%), and private agencies (40.0%); they served a variety of people throughout Kaua'i, in the fields of child and family welfare (30.3%), mental health/substance abuse (40.0%), violence, crime, and incarceration (10%), medical (10.0%), and gerontology (10.0%).

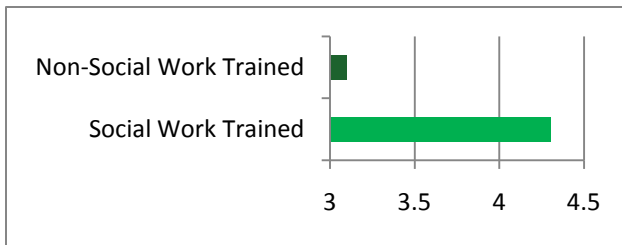
Historical Workforce Issues

Even before the budget crisis, defined for the purpose of this study as the time prior to the Summer of 2008, the county of Kaua'i faced many significant workforce issues in regard to providing adequate social services. When asked specifically about work force issues, responding supervisors, managers, and administrators said that they had on average 7 positions open per year, positions routinely took an average of up to six months to fill, and 30.0% of respondents said that they had to close positions in the past because they could not find an adequately qualified applicant.

In addition to problems acquiring adequately trained employees, respondents reported that people only stayed in their positions for an average of 5.4 years once hired, and that the most common reasons for leaving their jobs were finding another job (20.0%), better pay (20.0%), and relocation (20.0%).

Impact of Social Work Training

In regard to specific skills and knowledge, respondents were asked to rate both their social work trained and non-social work trained employees on a set of skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment.

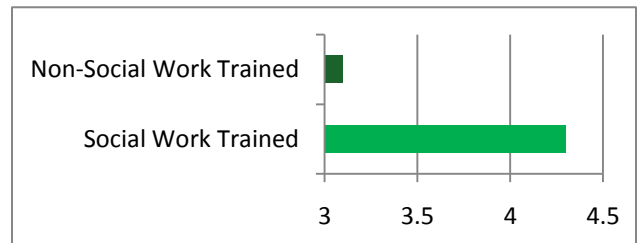


Diversity Issues

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall knowledge of diversity issues (with higher scores representing higher knowledge), social work trained employees averaged a score of 4.3, whereas non-social work-trained employees averaged a score of 3.1, though this difference was not statistically significant.³⁸

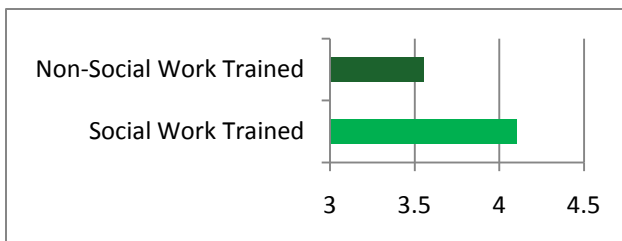
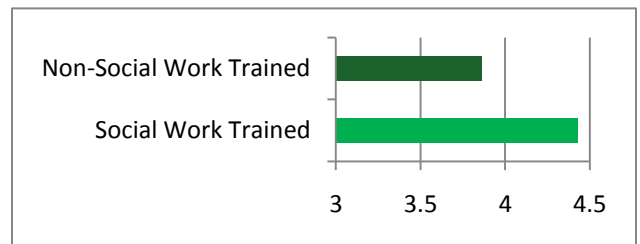
Practice Skills

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall practice skills (with higher scores representing more competent practice skills), social work trained employees scored statistically higher³⁹ (average of 4.3) than non-social work trained employees (average of 3.1). This suggests that social workers have better practice skills than other non-social work trained employees.



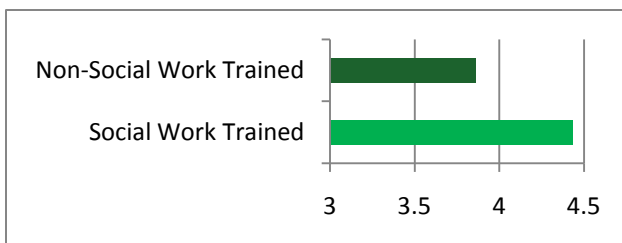
Ethics

In regard to responding whether or not their employees behaved ethnically, respondents scored their social work employees higher on behaving ethically (average of 4.4) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8). This difference was statistically significant,⁴⁰ suggesting that social work-trained employees behaved more ethically.



Strengths-Based Perspective

Respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees use a strengths-based perspective (average of 4.1) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.4). This difference was statistically significant, suggesting social work training leads employees to see the strengths in their clients more readily than those without such training.⁴¹



Client Advocacy

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their ability to advocate effectively for clients. Social work trained employees scored an average of 4.4, and non-social work trained employees scored an average of 3.8, a statistically significant difference.⁴² This suggests that respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees were effective client advocates.

³⁸ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.80$, $p = n.s.$

³⁹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.06$, $p < .084$

⁴⁰ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.82$, $p < .030$

⁴¹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.50$, $p < .047$

⁴² Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.82$, $p < .030$

Impact of Social Work Training

Social Workers' "primary strengths are serving youths and families with mental illness through a range of direct service case management and coordination of services between agencies."

Social Work Trained vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

Respondents from Kaua'i were asked in regard to their employees with social work degrees, to reflect on their primary strengths and weaknesses. There were 33% of the respondents that stated case management and case planning as strengths. In addition, 17% of the respondents stated that compassion and empathy was a strength and 33% of the respondents mentioned that social work perspective and knowledge was a strength. There were 17% of respondents that stated that engagement and interviewing, problem solving and clinical skills

were all strengths of employees at their organization with social work degrees. One child welfare supervisor stated that: *"Social work degree workers tend to have a broader knowledge base."* In considering weaknesses of employees with social work degrees, 50% mentioned lack of assessment skills and 17% are unclear of role/unable to work in an interdisciplinary team. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the respondents responded other miscellaneous personality quirks and agency specific knowledge.

Respondents in Kaua'i were also were asked in regard to their employees without social work degrees, to reflect on their primary strengths and weaknesses. Thirty eight percent (38%) of the respondents stated that strengths of employees without social work degrees are experienced in the field/practice wisdom. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents reported that work ethic (longevity, dedication, hard working, and work for less pay) was a strength of workers without social work degrees. Thirteen percent (13%) of the respondents mentioned compassion and empathy, flexibility, adaptability, willingness to learn and take direction, strengths perspective, problem solving skills as strengths of workers without social work degrees. Twenty-five percent (25%) mentioned other miscellaneous skills or attributes.

In reflection of weaknesses of employees without social work degrees, 83% mentioned general lack of social work skills and knowledge. Thirty three percent (33%) mentioned micro focused only and boundaries and compassion fatigue. Lastly, seventeen percent (17%) mentioned lack of clinical skills, cultural sensitivity, and professionalism as weakness.

Non-Social Work Trained employees': "strengths [are being] caring, hard workers, [being] mission driven. Weaknesses - conceptually they don't always understand SW practices and often don't see the bigger picture of the situation; they are not as objective in decision-making"

Need for Training and Education

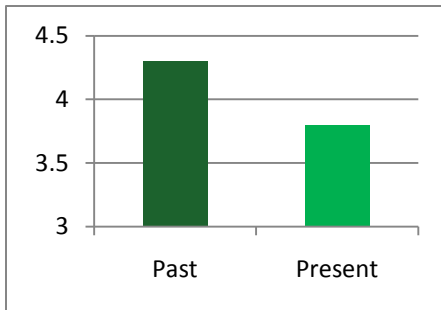
Respondents were asked if in regard to their employees, if there are critical skills, knowledge, or training that they should possess to work effectively with clients in their respective programs that should be integrated into social work education in Hawai'i. Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents stated that training in social work skills and in specific populations or areas should be integrated into social work education. This includes social work practice and skills needed to function as a social worker, including but not limited to, personal skills such as self-awareness and self-care as well as specialized training in certain areas such as crisis intervention, developmental stages, domestic violence, and/or severe mental illness. Fifty percent (50.0%) of respondents stated that no additional skills, knowledge, or training needed to be integrated into social work education in Hawai'i for employees to work effectively with clients.

In regard to social work training and education and the importance of understanding systems, one co-director stated: *"We see so many clients with multiple needs. It is rare that a woman presents with 'only' DV [domestic violence] as her issue. We are seeing increasing numbers of women with mental health, substance abuse, or both [of] these issues."*

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Past the Present

Social Service managers, supervisors, and administrators from Kauaʻi were asked to judge their ability to provide services along four dimensions, and to reflect on how these were accomplished in the past compared to the present. Overall, on all four items, respondents reported worse outcomes in the present than in the past, and those differences were not always consistently demonstrated to be a statistically significant difference, this could be due to the low sample size (n = 10).

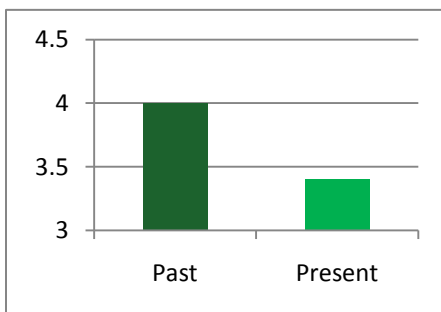
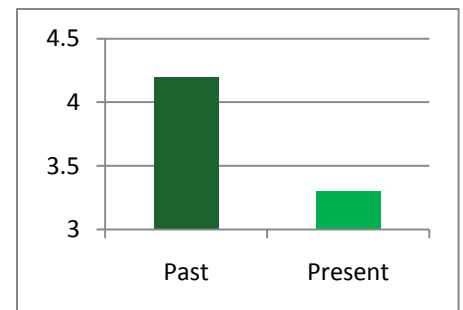


Meeting Program Goals and Objectives

When asked about their ability to meet effectively program goals and objectives, respondents from Kauaʻi indicated clear differences between the past and the present that was not statistically significant.⁴³ Although not perfect scores, respondents reported an average of 4.3 out of 5 for their ability to meet program goals and objects when reflecting on the past, but in the current economic situation, respondents only averaged a 3.8, suggesting the budget crisis has had the consequence of negatively impacting programs' abilities to meet their goals and objectives.

Provision of High Quality Services

Regarding their ability to deliver high quality services to their target populations, supervisors, managers, and administrators reported that prior to the summer of 2008 they were more consistent in providing high quality services (average of 4.2) compared to the present (average of 3.3), a difference that was not statistically significant.⁴⁴ This suggests that the budget crisis has had a significant impact on the ability to deliver quality services.

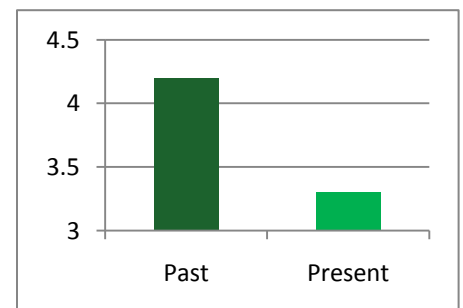


Manageable Caseloads

When asked about caseloads, caseloads in the present were rated as even less manageable than the past, with the past scored at an average of 4.0, and the present at 3.4.⁴⁵ This indicates that caseloads are becoming even less manageable in the post-budget crisis social service environment, across the variety of populations and domains represented by these respondents.

Adequate Resources

Consistent with prior finding, availability of resources was worse in the present when compared to the past.⁴⁶ When rating whether or not they had adequate resources to serve their clients, respondents replied that they agreed that prior to the summer of 2008 there were adequate resources (average of 4.2), while in the present they feel neutral about (average of 3.3) the level of resources. This suggests that in the present agencies on Kauaʻi are struggling with even fewer resources than in the recent past.



⁴³ t = 1.46, p = n.s.

⁴⁴ t = 2.07, p < .068

⁴⁵ t = 1.61, p = n.s.

⁴⁶ t = 2.21, p < .054

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Current Workforce and Program Delivery Issues

Current Impacts on Kauaʻi County

Currently, social service agencies have had to make a substantial number of changes to their personnel and the programs to keep providing program. For example, 70.0% of respondents reported that they had been forced to let at least one person go since the budget crisis began. Another 40.0% have reported that they have had to cut programs entirely from their agency. However, in addition to these quantitative responses, qualitative responses paint a picture of the complex nature of the changes that the budget crisis has imposed on social service agencies in Kauaʻi County.

In Kauaʻi County there is “Less time for direct client contact. Clients are sometimes wait-listed for services. Services are more generic/less client specific.”

Respondents were asked whether or not they had to implement any changes to program delivery and if so, what types of changes needed to be implemented. Thirty percent (30.0%) of respondents from Kauaʻi stated that there had been a decrease in quality of services delivered to clients, including putting clients on wait-lists. Thirty percent (30.0%) stated there had been cuts in service delivery, including decreasing direct client contact, and decreasing services for families. Thirty percent (30.0%) stated programs had experienced changes, specifically 20.0% stated eligibility had been altered and criteria of eligibility for services narrowed, and 10.0% of respondents stated that programs had been consolidated.

Respondents were asked what issues, other than the current economic situation, they felt were the most important issues facing the current social/human service delivery system in Hawaiʻi. Respondents on Kauaʻi felt that the most important issue facing the system in Hawaiʻi is problems in service delivery. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents mentioned something about problems with services. Of these respondents 50% mentioned specific areas relating to problems with lack of services such as quality aging services, mental health, children and families at risk, school conditions, unsatisfactory medical and health care, Child Welfare Services cases increasing, homelessness, affordable housing, theft, literacy, family violence, and substance abuse. Furthermore, another 30% mentioned not enough resources to fit the demand (how cuts will impact client services and how will workers be able to provide quality services with limited time). In addition, 20% of the respondents mentioned diminished services as being an important issue while 30% of the respondents mentioned a lack of qualified providers/staff as being a major concern facing our current service delivery system. One respondent stated that there are an “insufficient number of Master’s level practitioners to work in child welfare services.” Another respondent emphasized the importance of “having qualified/culturally sensitive workers to provide the services.”

Predictions for the Future of Social Services in Kauaʻi County

The majority of respondents mentioned that the current economic difficulties in Hawaiʻi will affect the long term quality of human service programs. 44% of the respondents mentioned a decrease in quality of life for clients as an issue, “the impact will be more children and families undergoing financial stress that will in turn affect their mental health”, along with another 44% mentioning a decrease in quality of services, “shortage of staff and lack of money to secure needed support services for children youth and families.” Furthermore, 33% of respondents mentioned loss of jobs/positions to be a key issue, as respondent stated, “we have had to lay off the less senior workers and are therefore unable to develop the younger workers and build a skilled and seasoned workforce for the future.” One child welfare supervisor, in response to the impact of the budget crisis, responded that “We will be forced to service more families who will be in more serious situations as many prevention services have been cut.”

“We will be forced to service more families who will be in more serious situations as many prevention services have been cut.”

MAUI COUNTY

Summary of Respondents

Demographics of Respondents:

Average Age: 49 years

Average Years Lived in HI: 30.0

Race/Ethnicity:

White: 38.5%

Asian: 15.4%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander: 7.7%

Mixed Race/Ethnicity: 15.4%

Other: 23.1%

Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education

High School: 0.0 %

Associate's: 0.0%

Bachelor's: 33.0%

Master's: 77.0%

Ph.D.: 0.0%

Education and Licensure

Possess a BSW: 15.4%

Possess a MSW: 61.5%

Licensed in HI: 58.0%

License in Another State: .00%

Not Licensed: 42.0%

Occupational Information:

Median Supervisees: **31.18**

Average Years in SW Field: 22

Average Years as a Supervisor/

Manager: 10

Average Years in Current Position: 9

Agency Demographics

Type of Agency:

Public: 62.0%

Private: 38.0%

Problem/Population Served:

Child & Family Welfare: 30.8%

Mental Health/Substance Abuse:
7.7%

Disabilities: 23.1%

Homelessness/Housing: 7.7%

Medical Social Work: 15.4%

Education: 15.4%

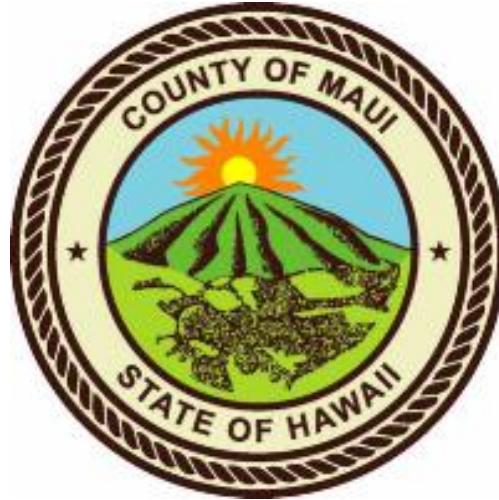
Has Supervisees on Another Island:

23.0%

Has Clients on Another Island: 3.01%

MAUI COUNTY

By Marisa Chin, Madeline Colon, Malissa Matsumura, Casie McAlinden, & Lauren Wilson



Survey Demographics

The *State of Social Services* Survey was completed by 13 total people from Maui County. Respondents had an average of 22 years of experience in the social service field, and 10 average years of experience as supervisors, managers, or administrators. The majority of respondents from Maui held social work degrees (15.4% BSW; 61.5% MSW) and a majority were licensed in the state (58%). Respondents were primarily white (38.5%), with representation from Asians (15.4%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (7.7%) and a variety of respondents who claimed two or more ethnicities (15.4%) or other races and ethnicities than those listed (23.1%).

The majority of agencies these respondents represented were public agencies (62%), and served a variety of people throughout the state, representing the fields of child and family welfare broadly defined (30.8%), mental health/substance abuse (7.7%), disabilities (23.1%), homelessness/housing (7.7%), medical social work (15.4%), and education (15.4%).

Historical Workforce Issues

Even before the budget crisis, defined for the purpose of this study as the time prior to the Summer of 2008, Maui faced many significant workforce issues in regard to providing adequate social services. Supervisors, managers, and administrators said that they had on average 5.8 positions open per year, positions routinely took an average of 4.3 months to fill, and nearly a third (27.3%) of respondents reported that in the past they had not found qualified applicants for some positions and were forced to close the position.

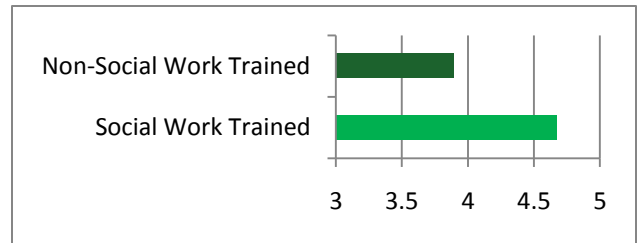
In addition to problems acquiring adequately trained employees, Maui respondents reported that people stayed in their positions for an average of 6 years once hired, and that the most common reasons for leaving their job were better pay and promotion.

Impact of Social Work Training

In regard to specific skills and knowledge, respondents were asked to rate both their social work trained and non-social work trained employees on a set of skills necessary to work effectively in the social service environment.

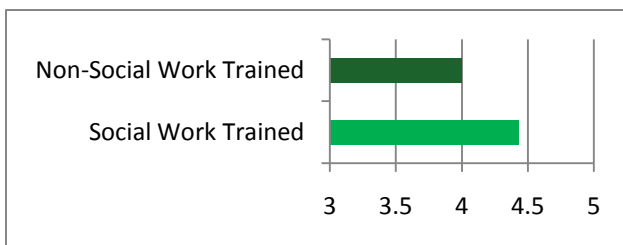
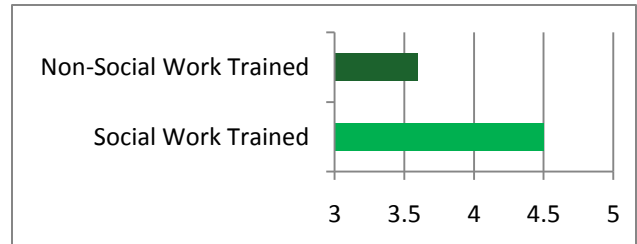
Diversity Issues

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall knowledge of diversity issues (with higher scores representing higher knowledge), social work trained employees averaged a score of 4.6, whereas non-social work-trained employees averaged a score of 3.8, a statistically significant difference,⁴⁷ suggesting social workers had more knowledge of diversity.



Practice Skills

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their overall practice skills (with higher scores representing more competent practice skills), social work trained employees scored higher⁴⁸ (average of 4.4) than non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8). This was statistically significant, it suggests that social workers have better practice skills than other non-social work trained employees.



Ethics

In regard to whether or not their employees behaved ethnically, respondents scored their social work employees higher (average of 4.4) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.8). The average scores indicated that social work trained employees behaved more ethnically, and this difference was marginally significant.⁴⁹

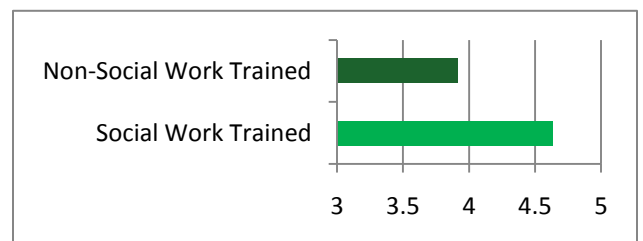
Strengths-Based Perspective

When asked about their employees' perspectives in working with clients, respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees use a strengths-based perspective (average of 4.2) compared to their non-social work trained employees (average of 3.4). Though there was a difference, the difference was statistically not significant⁵⁰.



Client Advocacy

Respondents were asked to rate their employees on their ability to advocate effectively for clients. Social work trained employees scored an average of 4.6, and non-social work trained employees scored an average of 3.6. This suggests that respondents were more likely to agree that their social work trained employees were effective client advocates, a difference that was marginally significant.⁵¹



⁴⁷ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 4.0$, $p < .016$

⁴⁸ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 1.5$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

⁴⁹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.4$, $p < .070$

⁵⁰ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.4$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

⁵¹ Results of a paired t-test, $t = 2.3$, $p < .062$

Impact of Social Work Training

Social Work vs. Non-Social Work Trained Employees

"I find having professional social workers on the staff greatly enhances the services provided, the awareness of cultural issues, the ethics of the work and the boundaries being maintained advocacy is much better."

Respondents noted a number of strengths of their employees with social work degrees. Personal traits and abilities, such as resourcefulness, flexibility, and problem solving were a strength noted by 12.5% of respondents. A quarter of respondents from Maui felt that generalist social work skills and values such as organization, case management and compassion were also a primary strength. Respondents (37.5%) said psychosocial awareness, such as knowledge of the ecological perspective, and the knowledge of the effects of person-in-environment was a strength. Workforce issues remained a pertinent topic – one clinical

director said *"We need more trained social workers on the ground, but we have to work to pay them a living wage before we can expect them to stay and grow and be more contributing."* Maui respondents also noted weaknesses in their employees with social work degrees. This weakness included lack of experience with clinical skills and understanding of state agencies such as Child Welfare Services and the Public Health and Legal System (50%). Cultural competency was a weakness noted by 12.5% of respondents.

When asked about employees without social work degrees, 50% of respondents reported these professionals lack social work values that include self-awareness, professionalism and a cultural sensitivity. An additional 50% of respondents felt they lacked social work skills and knowledge, including being too focused on micro issues (as opposed to macro issues), lacking insight, and having poor communication skills. Although these workers were brought on to alleviate perceived holes in social service workforce, Maui managers, supervisors, and administrators were aware of the compromise that entailed. For example, a social services said, *"Having untrained people will create further complications to the already stressed system and inefficient use of resources."* However, many respondents also expressed strengths surrounding employees without social work degrees including a strong work ethic that included length of time with the agency and working for less pay (37.5%), counseling skills (37.5%) and compassion (25%). In response to the difference between social workers and non-social workers a master's level clinical director of a social services agency stated, *"I prefer social workers. I don't find their weaknesses to be something that they are not aware of."* Like other counties, the non-social work trained employees are not without value, but they lack critical skills necessary to work effectively in the social services without further education.

"Social workers in general tend to have a person-in-environment mindset, and address interventions to the whole client system. They also understand research, finding resources, administration, and program development, and taking a lot of initiative to engage clients."

"I feel the primary skills, knowledge and training that should integrated into social work education in Hawai'i are knowledge of evidence based practice, ethical training on knowing one's limit, and cultural competence. " - Director of County Social Services Department.

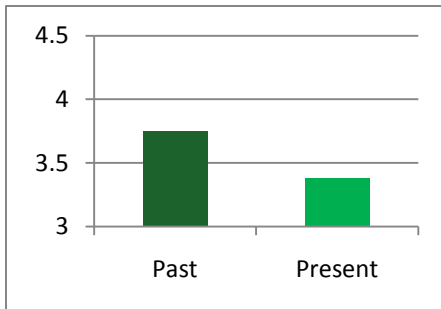
Need for Training and Education

When thinking of all their employees 90% of respondents felt there were indeed critical skills or knowledge that they should have and that should be included in social work education in Hawai'i. Of the respondents, 40% felt that there was a specific need for cultural competence training. Respondents called for training focused on "unique local culture" and "culturally competent assessment skills". Forty percent of respondents also felt social work education in Hawai'i would benefit from an increased focus on evidenced based practices, assessment, and personal skills. Increased knowledge of macro issues and community resources were also mentioned by 30% of respondents.

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Comparing the Past the Present

Social service managers, supervisors, and administrators were asked to judge their ability to provide services along four dimensions, and to reflect on how these were accomplished in the past compared to the present. Overall, on all four items, respondents reported worse outcomes in the present than in the past, and though on Maui these differences were not statistically significant, which could be due to the fact that Maui had the lowest ratings on the four dimensions in the past compared to other counties, suggesting significant challenges in program delivery on Maui in the past as well as the present.

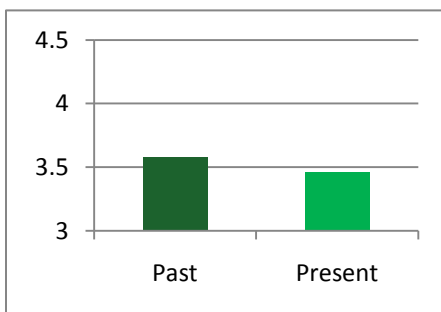
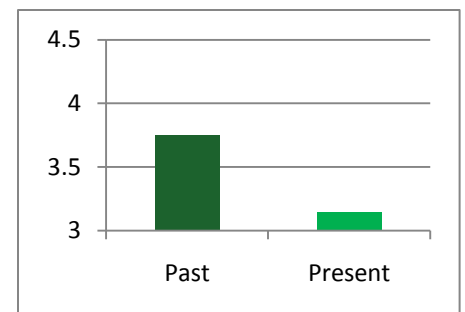


Meeting Program Goals and Objectives

When asked about their ability to effectively meet program goals and objectives, respondents indicated differences between the past and the present that were not statistically significant.⁵² Respondents reported an average of 3.8 out of 5 for their ability to meet program goals and objects when reflecting on the past, but in the current economic situation, respondents only averaged a 3.3. This suggests that since the budget crisis, on Maui it is marginally more difficult to meet programs goals and objectives.

Provision of High Quality Services

Regarding their ability to deliver high quality services to their target population, supervisors, managers, and administrators reported that prior to the summer of 2008 they were more consistent in providing high quality services compared to the present, but that difference that was not statistically significant.⁵³ Respondents reported an average of 3.8 when reflecting on the past, but in the current situation, respondents reported an average of 3.1.

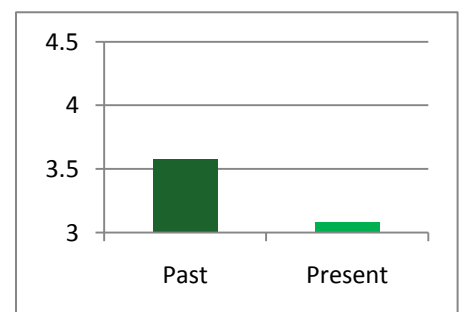


Manageable Caseloads

When asked about caseloads, both in the past and in the present, respondents indicated that caseloads have never been highly manageable. However, caseloads in the present were rated as even less manageable than the past, with the past scoring at an average of 3.6, and the present at 3.4.⁵⁴ These few respondents indicate that caseloads have not been drastically impacted on Maui since the budget crisis, but have been uniformly unmanageable, though there have been other impacts of the economic downturn.

Adequate Resources

Resources were also particularly challenging in the current climate compared to the past.⁵⁵ When rating whether or not they had adequate resources to serve their clients, respondents replied that they agreed that prior to the summer of 2008 there were slightly more resources (average of 3.6), while in the present they feel neutral (average of 3.0) about the level of resources. This suggests that in the present agencies are struggling with even fewer resources than in the recent past.



⁵² $t = 1.5$, $p = n.s.$

⁵³ $t = 1.7$, $p = n.s.$

⁵⁴ $t = .38$, $p = n.s.$

⁵⁵ $t = 1.5$, $p = n.s.$

Impact of the Budget Crisis

Current Workforce and Program Delivery Issues

The social services on Maui have been as significantly impacted by the budget crisis as many neighbor islands have. On the neighbor islands, there are limited resources, and the budget crisis has added to that deficit. Servicing neighbor island populations with minimal support has made it challenging to deliver quality services. Consequently, social services have had to develop creative ways to provide services. However, the economic downturn has had a significant impact to these innovative services.

“Due to lack of funding from the State, we have had to reduce the number of service hours to our clients and have had to turn away some clients.” –Non-Profit Executive Director

Current Impacts on Maui County

Currently, social service agencies have had to make a substantial number of changes to their personnel and programs to continue providing services. 12.5% of respondents on Maui reported that they’d been forced to let at least one person go since the budget crisis began. Another 25.0% have reported that they were no longer able to provide the same quality of service as they once did. Respondents made specific mention of increased waitlists (12.0%) and found it harder for their clients to secure services (25.0%).

Due to the economic challenges, 62.5% of respondents reported that their program has endured cuts in areas such as

“We need to decentralize services and engage in more community based care delivery and stop loading the resources at the top while denying employees resources and compensation at the front line.” –Behavioral Health Care Advocate

salary and in workforce, and in some cases eliminated programs to keep their agencies or units viable. Half of respondents experienced program changes, including consolidating programs and redefining whom the program serves. In addition, critical functions at agencies have been amended or dropped due to shortages in workforce. For example, one director of a housing-related agency said that *“Many mandated monitoring components have been left undone due to lack of expansion staff necessary to do these tasks. Duties among staff have been consolidated and several position descriptions amended to allow for more diversification.”*

Predictions for the Future of Social Services in Maui County

Respondents indicated long-term effects on their programs including inadequate funding, becoming more cost effective and innovative, decreasing in quality of service, work, and care, less staff development, training, and supervision, and a decrease in quality of life for clients. 12.5% of respondents were unsure about the future of their budget. Of the total Maui respondents, 22% stated that because of our economy's grave situation, the quality of care for their clients would decrease. At the same time, 22% felt their programs would be more cost effective in the future. It seems that the current economic situation that our state has endured has required programs to prioritize and become more innovative, but the costs of those changes have been noted. One director in the disabilities field said, *“I think government is going to continue to be frugal with money and try to conserve as much as possible even if this results in poor practice. Also, by cutting services now we will probably use more tax payer's money in the future to deal with the negative impacts (example: youths who don't receive services now will become detrimental to our society/[become] criminals). If we don't take care of our people now then the repercussions are going to be big/costly in the future.”*

“We have to focus on doing the basics . . . and seek innovations on how to do it better, more effectively, more efficiently.” – Social Services Clinical Director

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Social Workers in the Workforce

Social Services in Hawai'i have been significantly impacted by two recent policy decisions. First, the decision by the state to hire non-social work educated employees into positions that are the equivalent of social worker positions, and second, the series of deep budget cuts to social services following the budget crisis that began in 2008. This survey has revealed issues of deep concern to O'ahu, but particularly to the already limited social service infrastructure on neighbor islands.

Social Work Training

In regard to comparisons of social work vs. non-social work trained employees, social workers were found to score higher in important job related skills, knowledge, and values. Social work trained employees have a varied and diverse skill set that they bring to the job, where non-social work employees are often weak in critical job related skills. However, non-social work trained employees bring their own strengths, such as being connected to community and having a strong desire to help. Respondents consistently discussed the lack of qualified and well-trained employees who are also skilled in local systems and local culture. This speaks to the need for access to education for those who are already part of and familiar with the community versus recruiting practitioners from outside of the islands who may have the desired credentials but lack the cultural competency, traits, and abilities of those already on island. Respondents highlighted the importance of social work education for effective and high quality service delivery, and highlighted how opening jobs to non-social work trained employees may have a long-term impact on the overall quality of support delivered to our most vulnerable individuals and families. In summary:

- 1) There is still a critical need for social workers in the state of Hawai'i.
- 2) Social work trained employees have skills and experience necessary to perform at a high level in the social service field, including:
 - a) Having more knowledge of diversity
 - b) Having competent practice skills
 - c) Utilizing a strengths-based perspective
 - d) Being effective client advocates
 - e) Behaving ethically
- 3) Non-social work trained employees have the drive and desire to help, but lack critical skills to do so effectively.

Recommendation 1: Continued and increased support of social work education in the State of Hawai'i. By supporting the strengths of local people, yet providing the skills necessary to effectively work in the social service environment through social work education, the issues in Hawai'i's workforce can be better addressed.

- 4) Neighbor islands, particularly Kaua'i County and Hawai'i County, have particular difficulty regarding the acquisition of adequately trained social service personnel, and Maui has reported some of the least developed social services.

Recommendation 2: The state should find more ways to encourage equal access to social work education (including on neighbor islands). Models such as the collaboration between University of Hawai'i Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and the Department of Health and Human Services in their innovative Hawai'i Child Welfare Education Collaboration should be explored in other fields than child welfare as a means to provide sponsored education for employees already in position.

- 5) In Hawai'i, cultural competence was identified as something that can never be taken for granted and that all employees should do on-going work with their own knowledge and skills in cultural competence. In addition, other critical skills identified by respondents highlighted the need for increased clinical skills, as well as increased macro-related skills, such as understanding state systems.

Recommendation 3: A system of mandatory continuing education needs to be considered for social workers and others working with the state's most vulnerable populations to address ongoing changes in the state, with particular emphasis on cultural competence.

Conclusions

Impact of the Budget Crisis

The impact of the budget crisis on social services in Hawai'i has been severe. When asked to compare the state of social services now and in the past, prior to the budget crisis, respondents across the board noted that things were moving in the wrong direction. Half of respondents reported they have had to lay off people at their agency and/or cut programs to continue operating, and even with these changes, they have been forced to change eligibility criteria, restrict access to services, and cut down on client contacts. When asked about the future, these experts reported ongoing concerns about the impact on clients and on the safety net for the most vulnerable populations in the state. In particular, the already limited social service infrastructure on neighbor islands has been seriously strained, and the choices that have been made in regard to the budget cuts have exacerbated the inability of social service agencies to adequately meet the demands of their clientele. In the long-term, the potential cost of reduced social services to balance the current budget will result in greater overall cost due to an increase in social instability and increased marginalization of an already at-risk population. Specifically, this research suggests that:

- 1) Across the state, programs are being cut at an alarming rate
- 2) The budget crisis has had significant negative impacts on social services, including:
 - a) A decrease in the ability to meet program goals and objectives
 - b) A decrease in the ability to provide high quality services
 - c) Less manageable caseloads
 - d) Scarcer resources
- 3) Agencies have been forced to cut programs, change eligibility criteria, create waitlists, and a variety of other strategies to try to remain viable. This has resulted in a lack of services for many clients in-need, and has decreased the quality of services for those few who are still able to access services
- 4) At-risk populations are even more vulnerable to negative outcomes. They do not have access to the same level of quality services, and have fewer options or resources to meet their needs

Recommendation 4: Rather than across the board cuts in personnel and contracts, the state needs to create a clear system of priorities for continuing funding to maintain an adequate level of service provision to meet growing community need.

- 5) Both public and private agencies have been affected, though more private agencies have laid-off personnel
- 6) The existing social service system in the state is flawed, with both duplication of services and significant gaps in services that need to be addressed, which the budget crisis has only made worse

Recommendation 5: The state needs to critically examine the need for coordinating services. This can be accomplished through existing structures, or through the commission of investigations or a new department committed to mapping out the social services structure in the state and to develop plans for more coordinated services.

- 7) In regard to cutting personnel, Kaua'i County has seen the most cuts in personnel, and differences between neighbor islands and O'ahu are cause for concern

Recommendation 6: Particular attention to should be paid to any current or future cuts to neighbor island services. Given that most neighbor island services were already overburdened and under-resourced even before the budget crisis, cuts to these programs should halt and future plans that affect neighbor islands should receive the strictest scrutiny.

- 8) Supervisors, managers, and administrators of social service predict that the impact of the current budget cuts will be felt in the immediate and long-term future of social services in Hawai'i

Recommendation 7: Funding should be restored to critical services, such as child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse services, to prevent escalation among families in crisis, and to prevent long term consequences to our most vulnerable populations

